COURT RITUALS AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER UNDER THE MUGHALS, 1526-1748

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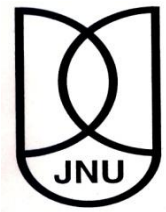
RICHA SINGH



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DECLARATION

I, Richa Singh hereby declare that the thesis entitled "Court Rituals and the Exercise of power under the Mughals, 1526-1748" submitted by me in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY of this university is a bonafide work and has not been submitted previously for any degree to this or any other university.

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'The history we read, though based on facts, is, strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgements.'

—Professor G. Barraclough, *History in a Changing World* (1955)

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Theme

In the Medieval period the terms power, compliance and subservient constituted central terms in the life of an individual.[1] In the reigns of great dictators too loyalty and obedience were counted as significant factors for the preservation of their authority. The Nazi slogan proclaimed: 'Loyalty is your honour'.[2] Cyrus II through the propaganda of restitution took control of Babylon without fighting a single battle.[3] A similar propaganda was used before by Neo-Babylonian rulers.[4] From the monarchs to the dictators, the wielders of power must legitimize their power because the power they own is not unlimited and absolute. Power is not a uni-linear relationship but shared and 'even a so-called powerful entity like the state is still dependent upon its subordinates as grounds for maintaining and upholding power'.[5] The channels through which power flows are multiple. The wielder of power is subjected to influences and resistance. The latter is a

[1] Frank Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, Central Publishing House, Allahabad, 1984 , p. 126.
[2] Agnes Heller, *The Power of Shame A Rational Perspective*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1985, p. 48.
[3] Cyrus Cylinder which was discovered in Babylon in 1879 reveals that Cyrus II in 539 B.C., the king of Achaemenid Empire in Iran conquered Babylon by defeating the last ruler of Neo-Babylonian dynasty and merging it with that of his own. The significance of the event lies in the manner Babylon was conquered i.e. without any military operation or violent means of bloodshed and loot. The clay cylinder informs that Marduk, the city god of Babylon and the patron of the Neo-Babylonian kings had chosen Cyrus II, a ruler not from Babylon to deliver justice to the people of Babylon from their oppressed ruler, Nabonidus. It reads, Marduk, 'king of the whole of heaven and earth…inspected and checked all the countries, seeking for the upright king of his choice. He took the hand of Cyrus, king of the city of Anshan…proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything'. Many historians, who studied the rein of Cyrus II, call the proclamation inscribed on the cylinder an imperial or a political propaganda through which Cyrus had endeavoured to justify the conquest of Babylon by showing himself as the one appointed by Marduk and thus, it was the divine will and favour bestowed upon him to save the city from the tyrant. Amelie Kuhrt, 'Babylonia from Cyrus to Xerxes', ed. John Boardman, *The Cambridge Ancient History, Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean, c. 525 to 479 B.C.*, vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1926, rep. 1988, pp.124, 4-5. Irving Finkel, 'Introduction', ed. Irving Finkel, *The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon, the Cyrus Cylinder*, I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., London, 2013, pp. 1-5.
Also see, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, 'The First Persian Empire, 550-330 B.C.', ed. Thomas Harrison, *The Great Empires of the Ancient World*, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 2009, p. 104.
[4] Flemming A. J. Nielsen, *The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History*, Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., Sheffield, 1997, p. 103.
[5] Leonard M. Hammer, *A Foucauldian Approach to International Law, Descriptive Thoughts for Normative Issues*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., England, 2007, p. 25.

significant part of power process.[6] Power, as Foucault calls it, is 'not a zero-sum game with the most powerful being the last entity standing or yielding the greatest influence'.[7]

So the questions arises as to how does in an institution like monarchy a ruler derive power. Is it army that moves an empire? Is wealth the source of the power of a monarch? Speaking of army, Babur had recorded in his memoirs that he was in the possession of comparatively a small army than that of the Rajput ruler of Mewar, Rana Sanga's. However, it was Babur who defeated the Rana at the Battle of Khanwa in 1527. Dara Shikoh, the heir apparent had an access to the imperial army which was much mightier than those at the disposal of Aurangzeb. And yet, Dara had lost the Battle of Samugarh to Aurangzeb who was far superior to his eldest brother in military generalship. Farrukh Siyar had won the battle against Jahandar Shah and sat on the Mughal throne with the support of a small army. In fact the strength of his army was so weak that the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin* remarked: 'Nevertheless there was so visible a superiority of force on the Emperor's side that it was generally believed that his rival would have no chance against him'.[8] Ralph Fitch says that Akbar was able to expand and consolidate his empire not purely on the basis of force and this was especially true in the case of the powerful Rajput potentates. He writes, 'winning over the warlike princes of Rajputana, partly by force, partly by diplomatic marriages and other concessions…'[9] Force is 'only a tiny part of power'.[10]

Declan Quigley in his work regards wealth as the source of monarchial power as one of the misconceptions associated with kingship. Monarchy is not principally about 'material privilege' and that it is 'perfectly possible to be extremely wealthy and have no connection to royalty or nobility whatsoever'.[11] In the court society it was not necessarily the Emperor or princes and princesses who were the wealthiest lots. Tavernier in his

[6] Ibid., p. 47.
[7] Ibid., p. 26.
[8] Seid Gholam Hossein Khan, *The Seir Mutaqherin or Review of Modern Times Being an History of India containing in general the reigns of the Seven Last Emperors of Hindostan*, vol. I, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1926. p. 52.
[9] Ralph Fitch, *England's Pioneer to India and Burma, His Companions and Contemporaries*, ed. J. Horton Ryley, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1998, p. 89.
[10] Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley and Sherry B. Ortner, *Culture/Power/History; A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1993, p. 5.
[11] Declan Quigley, *The Character of Kingship*, Berg, Oxford, 2005, p. 2.

account records the unparalleled extravagance of the wife of Jafar Khan, the Grand *Wazir* of Aurangzeb. He writes: 'This wife of Ja'far Khan is the most magnificent and the most liberal woman in the whole of India, and she alone expends more than all the wives and daughters of the Emperor put together…'[12]

Once a territory is occupied, in a monarchical set-up, the practical concern for obtaining legitimacy arises because statecraft is not solely about military strength or acquiring immeasurable wealth.[13] Several factors can contribute to gaining power and legitimacy and then sustaining them. Ritual is one of the effective instruments.[14] For the ruler to exercise his power efficiently, it was imperative to demonstrate it constantly in his every act through symbolic means. one of the most vital functions of rituals and ceremonials of kingship is to transform an ordinary man or a prince into a King. Rituals transform the identity of a person by who it is performed and the space where it is performed.

The court of the Mughals was 'the final arbiter of taste',[15] an oasis of the most excellent, the accomplished, the polished and the brilliant men and materials. It, perhaps more than any other court in the world, was deeply 'penetrated by etiquette and governed by the

[12] Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. I, tr. V. Ball, ed. William Crooke, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, rep. 2007, p. 310.

[13] '…rite commands more surely than brute physical force'. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 194.

[14] In the Vedic Aryan society, the notion that the society was divided into the four *varnas* (promoting hierarchies among men) had its back up in the ceremonies and rituals performed within the society. The inclusion of men who can perform rituals and the exclusion of those who cannot aided in exerting authority over those who were excluded. The Brahmanas were placed at the topmost in the *varna* order since they were the ones who presided over different ceremonies. The first three *varnas* were called the dvijati, or twice born which meant their 'second' birth and this was the initiation ceremony into the Vedic studies (*upanayana*). The fourth varna called Sudras were only *ekajati* (born only once). Among the twice-born *varnas*, it was the Brahmanas who had to maintain the highest level of purity since they were accorded the highest rank in their stratified society. Therefore, as the social rank degraded, the degree of exclusion in the rites and ceremonies increased accordingly. And since people who could not participate in various rituals, they had to observe restrictions put on their modes of behaviour and customs so as to safeguard the ritual purity of dvijati, and especially of the Brahmanas and by any means if the prescribed norms for them were flouted, *prayascitta* (penance or purification) recommended was severe. Because if the ritual purity of the Brahmanas was polluted, that meant threat to their authority and the very apparatus through which they maintained social discrimination which appeared in a stratified manner. Gen'ichi Yamazaki, 'Social Discrimination in Ancient India and its Transition to the Medieval Period', ed. H. Kotani, *Caste System, Untouchability and the Depressed*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 3-5.

[15] Stephen P. Blake, 'Courtly Culture under Babur and the Early Mughals', *Journal of Asian History*, vol. 20, No. 2, Harrassowitz Verlag, 1986, p. 203.

strictest codes of conduct'.[16] The Mughals claimed a set of symbols, metaphors and ceremonial acts to represent this authority. The symbols of the imperial sovereignty conveyed the ideas and values that were part of the Mughal authority, so their extensive use implemented a means of control. The meanings and the metaphors of celebrations, spectacle, theatre, etc., are not static but extremely pliable, infused with ideological connotations.[17]

The basis for the efficacy of the observation of rituals lies in their ability to represent ideology. The employment of ideology as a tool for statecraft is articulately explained by Louis Althusser. He puts forward a contemporary theory with respect to the Marxist theory of the State Apparatus[18] and calls it the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). He differentiates the ISAs from the Marxist's (Repressive) State Apparatuses by the manner in which the latter, by repression and violence; along with the Govt., administration, the (Repressive) State Apparatus constitute the Army, the Police, Courts, prison, etc. as important tools of repression. But at the same time, he also asserts that no State Apparatus is an absolute (Repressive) State Apparatus or an absolute ISAs. Whether it is a (Repressive) State Apparatus or an ISAs, both function by repression and ideology, only the degree of their use differs.

His central thesis on the structure and functioning of ideology highlights a very significant aspect of ideology i.e. ideology which is equal to illusion enables a small number of men 'who base their domination and exploitation of the 'people' on a falsified representation of the world which they have imagined in order to enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations'.[19] Thus, ideology not only creates an imaginary representation of an individual who is in power or aspires to be in power and his world but it also represses the creation of any imaginary representation of others.

[1616] B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Wonders of a Golden Age, Painting at the Court of the Great Mughals, Indian Art of the 16th and 17th centuries from Collections in Switzerland*, 1987 Museum Rietberg Zurich, p. 86.

[17] Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove, 'Spectacle and Text, Landscape Metaphors in Cultural Geography', eds. James and David Ley, *Place/Culture/Representation*, Routledge, London, p. 58.

[18] This is the term used for the State by the Marxists classics which sees the State as a repressive tool in the interests of the ruling classes against the proletariat in the class struggle.

[19] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology & Ideological State Apparatuses', *Critical Quest*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 1970, rep. 2012, pp. 33-4.

The Mughal state broadly recognized the plurality of religions and traditions of the land they ruled over. A set of ideologies the Mughal Emperors, especially Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan professed were not to portray themselves as Muslim rulers but as the rulers of all mankind. This was done by appropriating iconography and metaphors and customs from around the world to accentuate the notions of Universal rule and absolute peace or *sulh kul* in their domain. Hence, they took the titles like Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Alamgir, etc. which declared them the ruler of the world. For the Mughals, time, periodisation and chronology shared more of an asymmetrical relationship.[20] They projected their realm as the utopian world of perfect social order.[21]

However, as Rome was not built in a day, the Mughal ideological 'utopian world' also evolved in stages. One of the grave difficulties that the early Mughal Emperors had to face was the lack of unflinching loyalty and devotion from their men. Babur's relatives and *begs* and Humayun's brothers' treachery was one of the setbacks they had to experience in order to establish an empire. It was Akbar who was able to convert heterogeneous collection of men at his court into a 'service nobility of generally consistent reliability'[22] who by the time of Shah Jahan's period emerged as a class of great men who viewed their service and loyalty to the Emperor as a legitimate legacy they inherited through their father and forefathers. Service to the Emperor became no less than a kind of adulation which was borrowed from the Rajput notion of personal service to a ruler as veneration.[23] Imperial service became a mark of honour and continuity with them. The notions of service and honour were very strongly secured with the performance of ritual values. The placement of a noble in court rituals and ceremonies and protocols clearly reflected his standing in the court circle. By arousing the sentiments of shame, embarrassment, disgust and fear through the process of court rituals and protocols, the civilizing process is put into action and individual is 'moulded into

[20] Harbans Mukhia, *Exploring India's Medieval Centuries, Essays in History, Society, Culture and Technology*, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2010, p. 37.
[21] Monica Juneja, 'On the Margins of Utopia—One More Look at Mughal Painting', *The Medieval History Journal*, 2001, 4: 203, p. 223.
[22] John F. Richards, 'Norms of Comportment Among Imperial Mughal Officers', ed. Barbara Metcalf, *Moral Conduct and Authority*, University of California Press, Bekerley, 1984, p. 255.
[23] John F. Richards, *Power, Administration and Finance in Mughal India*, VARIORUM, 1993, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Surrey, p. 267.

conformity with a certain standard by external pressure and compulsion'.[24] And the smallest unit of a society, i.e. family was subjected to imperial surveillance.

But rituals have another facet too. Just as power doesn't enable its wielder to be all powerful, likewise David Kertzer submits that 'even the ritual-makers are themselves imprisoned in a cultural nexus that sets constraints on their range of choice' because of which public or spectators are not mere passive recipients of rituals formulated by an elect.[25] Emile Durkheim, an eminent sociologist postulates that rituals can generate and sustain solidarity. But they can also be used to 'polarize and stimulate latent aggression'.[26] Andre Beteille too highlights this facet of ritual performance.[27] It is because of the presence of inherent polarities in the practice of rituals that the prospect for contestation of power is remains.

Objectives of the Study

The thesis is an attempt to look at the creation and elaboration of the Mughal court rituals and ceremonies and protocols performed at the court from the reigns of Babur to Muhammad Shah reign, as one of the multiple techniques to fulfill imperial ideologies so as to legitimize the rule and power of the Mughal Emperor. It proposes to show that since 'power of the individual ruler was by no means so unrestricted or absolute...',[28] therefore, the rituals not only constitute power of the Emperor but simultaneously they limit his power which reflect the potency as well as the limitations of rituals. The work examines that how the failure to perform or the attempt to do away with the established norms of comportment and rites could prove fatal to the authority of the reigning Emperor, that the discontinuation of the conventional customs meant disruption in the process and mechanisms through which the notions of kingship, power, legitimacy and hierarchy

[24] Stephen Mennell, *Norbert Elias, Civilization and the Human Self-Image*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, p. 44.
[25]An anthropologist and historian, David Israel Kertzer's works mainly deal with politics and culture. In the mentioned work of his, he explains a connection between the 'effective use of rituals' and 'the success of all political groups'. Kertzer, David I. Kertzer, 'Ritual, Politics, and Power', *Journal of Social History*, 23 (1), Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988, p. 191.
[26] Loc. cit.
[27] Andre Beteille, *Caste, Class and Power, Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, rep. 1969, p. 55.
[28] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, tr. Edmund Jephcott, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, p. 3.

became intensely embedded in the Mughal political culture. The erosion in the concept of sovereignty, in the notions of service, favour and honour in turn brought erosion in the public image of the Emperor and yet in the times of turmoil and instability, the Mughal Emperor remained the source of political legitimacy.

Situating the Historiography and Gaps in Extant Knowledge

We shall now discuss the existing historiography on the subject. The period of early works on Mughal rituals and ceremonials and courtly culture was characterized by a very sluggish growth and the early authors lament about the lack of secondary research materials. The principal cause for this is the reconstruction of history by political historians in a very selective manner, engaging in dialogue with the military and administration and structures of politics, agrarian system, the monetary, the *mansab*, the *jagir* systems, etc. [29] and sidelining and ignoring pageantry and pomp. Moreover the information on Mughal court, its etiquette and ceremony is scattered widely and so, gathering information on the court is an arduous task.

However in present historiography there are some innovative works done in the field. But still the interest shown by the scholars of Indian history on Indian courtly culture and on the history of manners are few and especially when compared with the historiographical traditions of European courtly societies, the picture is not very encouraging as it shows largely an indifferent attitude towards such concerns. A detailed and proper research on topic is yet to be done to get a fuller picture of it. While on the other hand, European historiography on courtly culture has produced rich and diverse interpretation. The works of Norbert Elias have greatly contributed to our understanding of courtly culture and its attributes and dynamics. Through *The Court Society,*[30] *Norbert Elias, Civilization and the Human Self-Image,*[31] Norbert Elias throws light on the issues of court circles which draw hierarchical differences amongst nobles, viz. court aristocratic figuration, etiquette, ceremony and bonding with the king on the basis of

[29] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'The Mughal state –Structure or Process? Reflections on Recent Western Historiography', *IESHR*, vol. 29, 1992, pp. 293-6.
[30] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, tr. Edmund Jephcott, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983.
[31] Stephen Mennell, *Norbert Elias, Civilization and the Human Self-Image*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989.

court protocols, accepted modes of behaviour, through infusing the sense of service and honour and by making courtiers as prestige consumers.

Coming to early works, the treatment to history writing is mainly functional (i.e. how it happened), narrative and factual. They are significant, for quantification of data is valuable as a means for checking conclusions based on other sources and therefore, this is one of the tools for historical formulation.[32] Most importantly, the early works laid a foundation stone for further research. The recent historiographical trends on the topic have been more analytical and causal (how it happened) in approach. The authors now are more concerned with explaining the causation in history, giving political, social and even psychological causes for the adoption of such elaborate Mughal rituals and protocols.

Mubarak Ali's *The Court of the Great Mughal*[33] is one of the pioneering works on the topic because the work belongs to the period when very scanty secondary source materials were available on Mughal cultural history due to the old preoccupation with political and constitutional history. Therefore, his attempt to write something particularly on the Mughal court at that time is itself quite praiseworthy. The book highlights different facets of Mughal court life. Through his work he tries to explain the reason behind the Mughals heavily adopting non-Islamic Persian ceremonies and rituals and it was not only the Mughals but much before them the court of the Abbasid Caliphate too had incorporated some of the Persian protocols. However, when speaking about the other influences like the court ceremonies and mannerisms borrowed from the *Chingizid* and Rajput traditions, he is extremely brief.

Md. Azhar Ansari's *Social Life of the Mughal Emperors (1526-1707)*[34] is another important early work, providing an insight into the pompous life of the Mughals, their riches and grandeur. The book gives vivid details not only about the popular Mughal festivals and celebrations like *Nauroz* , birthdays, weighing ceremonies, *Khush Ruz* (introduced by Humayun) but also those less celebrated ones and less talked about in

[32] K.A. Nizami, *State and Culture in Mediaval India,* Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1985, p. 25.
[33] Ali, Mubarak, *The Court of the Great Mughals*, dissertation, Germany, 1976.
[34] Ansari, M. A, *Administrative Documents of Mughal India*, B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1984.

secondary sources viz, *Shab–i-barat*, *Jashn-i-gulal pash*, *milad* (reference to this particular rejoicing is traceable only in the reign of Shahjahan). He also talks about the changes that occurred in the observation of the ceremonials under the reigns of the Mughal Emperors (from Babur to Aurangzeb). He also shows the utility of the Mughal *darbar*. One of the significant contributions made by him is that he tries to examine the role of ladies of the Mughal harem in the court life, their part in feasts and festivals and shows the changes that crept into the world of Mughal ladies with the progress of the empire which is not much worked on in the early works.

The other early works by Medieval Indian historians like Ibn Hasan's *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*,[35] A.B. Pandey's *Social and Government in Mediaval India*,[36] *The Mughal government A.D 1556-1707*,[37] etc. follow a similar functional approach towards history-writing. Besides some of the works appear to have echoed the notion of bourgeois critics i.e. the ceremony and etiquette were mere redundant activities and behaviour. For instances, A. B Pandey's remark, 'The court squandered away *crores* of rupees in dissipation and pompous extravagance' and thus, misused public funds; Md. Azhar Ansari's statement, 'the pedantic show of gorgeous costume and dresses, of perfumes and cosmetics are necessary evils of aristocratic society' seem to share a similar view.

Of the recent works, *The Mughals of India*[38] by Harbans Mukhia is one of the most essential. He regards his work as 'an essentially experimental venture, almost independently of the author's violation.' He came up with some new perspectives on the empire and calls them 'the key entry points for understanding the nature of the Mughal state and society.' Mughal etiquette is one of these key entry points. He laments that these entry points have 'remained unexplored in the arena of the history–writing of Mughal India, even in the midst of innumerable studies of a whole spectrum of themes and some very innovative endeavours', and thus, describes his writing as 'preliminary'. H.Mukhia goes beyond a narration of court etiquette and seeks to understand its evolution

[35] Ibn Hasan, The Central structure of the Mughal Empire, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1936.
[36] A. B. Pandey, *Social and Government in Medieval India*, Central Book Depot Allahabad, 1965.
[37] U. N. Day, *The Mughal government A.D 1556-1707*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1970.
[38] Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, Blackwell Publishing, Victoria, Australia, 2004.

and more particularly its meaning, within the contest of the court as a microcosm of society. He identifies the reign of Babur, Humayun and Akbar as evolutionary phase of the Mughal etiquette as the court rules were still evolving and flexible. Through various anecdotes, he explains the relative flexibility in the observance of etiquette in the early phase of the empires evolution. According to him, the fact that the first three rulers of the Empire were personally very accessible doesn't support the notion that the rules of etiquette, the essence of which was a very strict regulation of access to the Emperor's person, were closely followed during this phase of the empire. But by the time Manucci visited Aurangzeb's court, etiquette had become more detailed, less plastic. He also draws our attention to the fact that regarding the etiquette of the empire, there are still some uncertainties like at what point of time, the demarcated lines at the Mughal court were actually drawn is still a mystery to his historians working on this, as we learn of them from the *Ain-i-Akbari*, written towards the end of the 16th c.

Interestingly, he likens the protocols observed at the Mughal court with those of a holy place. For instance standing or sitting on the right side of the emperor was indicative of his favour. He quotes from the *Bible* and the *Quran* to highlight a similar connotation attached to the right side in religious spheres. Other historians like J.F Richards, Daud Ali are of the same opinion that the manners of the court overlapped with conceptions of conduct within religious domains inevitably.

Besides the historical texts, his use of Mughal miniature paintings for understanding the etiquette of the empire has been quite unique and commendable as Mughal miniatures are among few sources that provide us with a rich body of materials for the study of the Mughal court and society. But Mukhia here makes some very significant observation on Mughal court through a cautious examination of the two Mughal miniatures, one depicting Babur's court and another, Shah Jahan's.

Another fresh work done on the topic is *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* written by Ruby Lal[39] which tries to understand the peripatetic world of the Mughals under Babur and Humayun; the court society and women of the respective

[39] Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

reigns. She gives a synoptic view of the rituals and protocols observed at the early Mughal Emperor's courts and camps. She also explores the Mughal women participation in all this in the matter of correct comportment and in the elaboration of hierarchies, what was their place in the camps and the courts but the sources available to reconstruct their world 'seem to construct women in a rather narrowly defined manner: as producers of much coveted heirs to the throne and as carriers of traditions.

Now let us take a look at the works which are not very recent yet they contribute significantly in our understanding of the topic. The book, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire* by Douglas E. Streusand[40] is on imperial court and centre. For him the real history of the Mughal state began with Akbar implicitly and so his whole focus is on examining exclusively the reign of Akbar. He provides us with a fairly conventional political history, dealing with the years from 1556 to about 1570. He talks about the definitive reforms of Akbar and attempts to demonstrate the 'syncretic' nature of ideology under Akbar, on the basis of an examination of court–ritual. He is of the view that the Mughal constitution, rituals evolved slowly. While talking about the ceremony of the exchange of gifts, he raises two issues – i) Is it possible to say that this ritual had any symbolic significance or was it just a transaction as Dirk kolff puts it and called this gift exchange as a 'gift economy'; ii) Was it a proof of the corruption prevalent in the Mughal administration.

M. Athar Ali in *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*[41] explores the various aspects of Mughal nobles under Aurangzeb's reign and some were related to their conduct at the Mughal court, the protocols they followed, honorary distinctions and titles they received and the system of presents. He shows a connection between the imperial favour and the rank of a noble i.e., higher the rank of a noble, greater the imperial flavour he received. Through his work, he attempts to bring out a darker side of the ritual of *peshkash* and criticized it from ethical point of view and concludes that the Mughal governing class was a corrupt one who would not perform their tasks without their hands being greased. However, his contention is primarily based on European sources (Norris, Manucci, and

[40] Douglas E. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1989.
[41] M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 1966.

Bernier) and these sources are partly based on bazaar-gossip. The author, himself at one place seems to doubt the reliability of these European sources when he remarks,' how far Bernier is right in stating that the nobles were ruined partly because of presents, they had to offer to the Emperor, it is difficult to say'. Besides, Harbans Mukhia asserts that these European travellers were unable to understand an 'alternative cultural and political milieu,' and constantly denounced the giving of gifts and tributes to the Mughal Emperor, princes, and nobles as bribes. But in actuality, the giving of gifts by an inferior to his supervisor was reflective of a hierarchy of rights. J.F. Richards, in 'The Mughal Empire, says that the demand of gifts by the Mughal Emperor from his courtiers everyday and also from the petitioners was far from being an index of greed but these gifts were given to his Majesty for the imperial favour granted to them by letting them enter the grand Mughal *darbar* and allowing them to have a glimpse of his August presence. R. Nath's work, 'History of Mughal Architecture', reveals a very significant point that while *peshkash* was received openly, there was '*Dasturi'* or commission for getting some work done, given clandestinely. Ather Ali, since extensively and exclusively, deals with the Mughal nobility therefore he claims that the real object of these detailed rules of court etiquette was 'to impress upon the nobles of magnitude of the imperial prestige and authority' and 'at the same time to impress the mass of the people.' but on a closer examination of these rituals and protocols, we realize that they were the means of realizing a greater object.

The Prime Ministers of Aurangzeb by Laiq Ahmad[42] throws light on the three wazirs or Prime Ministers of the Empire: Muazzam Khan, Jafar Khan and Asad Khan. One very useful piece of information gathered from this work was the high-ranking nobles in their attempt to get imperial favour; they tried to appease the ladies of the harem. Mir Muhammad Saeed who was later known as Muazzam Khan and was a favourite of Aurangzeb's mother Hayat Bakhshi Begum, built a four-storied palace *Hayat Mahal*, after her name under his personal supervision. The fact that the palace was so maginificent is obvious from its comparison with the 'Eden' by Nizamuddin Ahmad the author of *Hadiqat-us-Salatin*. There is an interesting narration of the grand reception of

[42] Laiq Ahmad, *The Prime Ministers of Aurangzeb,* Chugh Publications, Allahabad, 1976.

Aurangzeb on his royal visit to the palace. He shows the suspicion created in the minds of the Kachwaha Rajput nobles due to the certain rituals abolished by Aurangzeb. One such important ceremony was that of the application of *'tika'* on the forehead of a subjugated Raja.

R. Nath in 'The Institution of *Jharoka-darsan*' [43] tries to trace the growth and development of this institution of *Jharoka* from Babur to Aurangzeb. The first reference to it from the Mughal sources comes from the *Baburnama*. Babur called it *Shah Nashin* and this was a *Timurid* custom, thus brought from central Asia. Humayun continued it. But it was Akbar who gave it the status of the institution and used it for watching elephant-fights as well. Jahangir broadened its scope by adding continued various functions to it. Under Shahjahan it continued with same purposes. However, for Aurangzeb's reign , he doesn't directly mentions that he abolished it (as other historians like I.H Qureshi in *The Administrating of the Mughal empire*) but he uses Saqi Mustaid Khan's *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* to prove that it was practiced under Aurangzeb ' at least as late as 1670 or the 12th year of his reign'. From this review of the growth and development of the *jharoka*, he makes a point that it was more an institution than architecture.

G. Z. Refai begins his work 'Foreign Embassies to Aurangzeb's court at Delhi, 1661-65'[44] by bringing the reader's attention to the sketchy accounts of Islamic diplomacy which hardly contain any information on the history of Mughal diplomacy and that the lack of material derives from the total indifference shown by Mughal chroniclers towards recording the details of ambassadorial visits. He asserts that 'from the famous embassy of Charlemagne to *Caliph* Harun al Rashid's court in the ninth century to Aurangzeb's time in the eighteenth century, we have to turn to foreign sources for detailed accounts.' Mughal court chroniclers recorded only the embassies of rival Muslim powers whose visits attested the power and wealth of the host. The only notice given to a non-Muslim embassy by Mughal historians was the Ethiopian embassy to Aurangzeb in 1665.

[43] R. Nath, 'The Institution of Jharoka-darsan', ed. S. Nurul Hasan, *Art and Culture*, Abhinav Publication, New Delhi, 1981.
[44] G. Z. Refai, 'Foreign Embassies to Aurangzeb's court at Delhi, 1661-65', ed. Atul Kumar Sinha, Perspectives in Indian History, Anamika Publishers & Distributors Ltd., New Delhi.

'The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir' by John. F. Richards in *The Mughal state 1526-1750* edited by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam[45] revolves around the question of why and how were the Mughal Emperors (Akbar and Jahangir) able to create a system of authoritative, hierarchical relationships; that how they helped in the idolization of the recurrent problem of challengeable legitimate rule or of political stability , how expansion of bureaucracy during Akbar's time, called for a need to unite the heterogeneous Mughal nobility for a common cause of upholding the integrity and sovereignty of the empire; how they acted as a binding factor between the emperor and the nobles at the Mughal court and what about the sense of loyalty of the nobles who were on a prolonged separation from the imperial centre, how their loyalty was evoked; how the rituals aided in the establishment of a master-slave relationship; and how submission to the Emperor, the unconditional service and obedience was synonymous with imperial favour and enhancement of honour.

The historiography on the later Mughals mainly deals with court intrigues, the reigning emperor's weak temperament and the rise in the factions in nobility, and political instability. However, there is hardly any reference to the physicality of the court, how were the important ceremonials like coronations, *navroz*, birthdays, etc were practiced; how the daily activities of the Mughal Emperor were performed during this phase of the time; there are no information on the detailed observation on the practice of the rituals and ceremonials and modes of comportment of the time. Therefore, there's a scarcity of information on the rites of royalty, and the involvement of nobles in the ritual performance.

Muslim Society in Northern India during the Eighteenth Century by Muhammad Umar[46] is one of the most important works available for the description of the imperial court and household routine, royal prerogatives, court ceremonials, celebrations and festivals practiced and dances and music parties attached to the court, the confinement of the

[45] John F. Richards, 'The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir', eds. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subramanyam, *The Mughal State (1526-1750),* Delhi, Oxford University Press.
[46] Muhammad Umar, *Muslim Society in Northern India during the Eighteenth Century,* Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 1998.

princes and the decay of the Mughal royalty. It also describes about the composition and the factionalism of the nobility.

Jadunath Sarkar's *The fall of the Mughal Empire (1739-1754)*[47] begins with the condition of the Mughal empire after the departure of Nadir Shah and the subsequent change in the character of Muhammad Shah, his increasing disinterest in delivering daily kingly duties, further aggravated the tension between the Turani and Irani factions at the court, causing the break-down of the administration.

The author of *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740,* Satish Chandra[48] studies the role of the nobility in the downfall of the Mughal empire, that powerful nobles as well as some obscure figures were desperate to proclaim themselves as the badshah makers. He contends that the core of the crisis of the Mughal empire is linked to the increased factionalism in the ruling classes leading to a breakup of a central polity along with other cause i.e. the collapse of the *jagirdari* system. H.G Keene's *The Fall of the Moghul Empire of Hindustan*[49] equips us with the political narrations of the later phase and several associated matters pertaining to it.

As in the later Mughal period, the Mughals experienced an on and off relationship with the Rajputs. For understanding the link between them and the frequent deployment of gifts, imperial *farmans* and exchange of symbolic objects especially between Ajit Singh of Marwar and the Mughal emperor Farrukh Siyar and the attempts of the Rajput rajas to exploit the sentiments of the other Hindu communities like the Jats on the ground of the curtailment of their previously held privileges, R.S. Sangwan's *Jodhpur and the Later Mughals (1707-1752),*[50] is significant.

Sources

The method followed in the study is descriptive and analytical. To address the above questions three different types of primary sources have been used. First, beginning with

[47] Jadunath S. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, vol. I (1739-1754), Orient Longman, London, 1964.
[48] Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740*, Oxford University Press, 2002.
[49] H. G. Keene, *The Fall of the Moghul Empire of Hindustan*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004.
[50] R. S. Sangwan, *Jodhpur and the Later Mughals, A.D. 1707-1752*, Pragati Publications, New Delhi, 2006.

the Persian sources, they are full of information on the Mughal ceremonials and rituals they followed and on courtly culture, especially from Akbar's period. The Mughal court chroniclers were all courtiers, dealt primarily with the accession and coronation of the Emperor, his daily routine, dispensation of kingly duties, polity, nobility and administration and also to some extent, the ladies of the harem and their participation in ceremonials and festivals like *navroz, khushroz,* exchange of gifts, etc. Therefore, there is no lack of source material on the subject. But the information available on them is dispersed and organising the scattered information is quite an arduous affair. Besides the court chroniclers hardly record anything on the Mughal subjects (leaving Abul Fazl's account) and so on one hand we have enough of information on the employment of the ceremonials and rituals in making and in the preservation of the Mughal courtly culture but what exactly was their role in building up a relationship between the Emperor and his subjects has not been stressed in the Persian accounts and also it has not been a matter of serious study. In the historical writing of the period the Europeans coming to the Mughal court were largely ignored too.

Starting with the peripatetic phase of the Empire, memoirs of the first Mughal Emperor Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, the *Baburnama*[51] is an essential source for understanding the situation of his time. Since Babur was struggling to establish his hold over a territory, and was engaged in war now and then, therefore, holding of the court and formulating associated protocols and rituals was out of the question. Only in times of expediency the nobles were asked to assemble and on the occasions of the exchange of gifts, award of robes of honour, titles on important functions like on the arrival of the Uzbec ambassadors, marriages, birth of a royal child, etc. court was held. There were several instances recorded by Babur which show that in the absence of established etiquette and codes of behaviour, the begs talked with Babur in an inappropriate manner. Frequent arrangement of parties was recorded which were very informal in character. His autobiography is important from the perspective that it equips us with the life condition of ladies in those time.

[51] *The Baburnama, Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, ed. and tr. Wheeler M. Thackston, The Modern Library, New York, 1996, rep. 2002.
Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama,* 2 vols., tr. A. S. Beveridge., New Delhi, 1970.

To examine the rituals and ceremonials of Humayun's time, his sister, Gulbadan Bano Begum's account[52] is fundamental. She gives us a glimpse of life in the Mughal harem. From her work it is to be observed that the females of Babur's and Humayun's period used to mix freely with their male-friends and visitors. Sometimes they went out in male garments, played sports like polo and enjoyed music as well. She wrote about the uncertainty of Humayun's rule, its trials and tribulations, and in such an unstable environment, just as we see in Babur's period, the rites of royalty were minimal.

Another account dealing with the reign of Humayun is *Tezkerem al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Humayun* by Jouhar.[53] He began the narration with the accession of Humayun and ended it with his return from Persia and his regaining the sovereignty. His work is essential from the fact that it documents the activities of Humayun in his day to day life closely. Though his daily life was not ritualised as we see in the times of the Mughal successors, yet there were attempts made by Humayun to formulate some codes of behaviour and made his men abide by them.

Khwand Amir's *Humayun Nama*[54] is important from the fact that it reveals several innovations brought by Humayun at his court. It was after he returned from exile from Persia and his re-conquest of Hindustan that he had an opportunity to implement rules and regulations at his court. Amir gives an account of the celebrations at the court and also that the court was held not only on important occasions but every day and he fixed tasks to his men at court. While the records of Gulbadan and Jouher tell us about the peripatetic court life of Humayun's period Amir's account throws light on the fact that after he regained his lost dominion which also marked the end of the Emperor's nomadic life, the court became stable and the courtiers were called to attend it on a regular basis. At this phase of his life, Humayun attempted to bring several innovations which he thought to be appropriate for the court. However, the Mughal rituals and ceremonials acquired their main character since Akbar's period. Akbar brought a series of them at his court.

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[52] Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama*, ed. A. S. Beveridge, London, 1902, New Delhi, rep. 1996.
[53] Jouher, *Tezkerem al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Humayun*, tr. Charles Stewart, Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, Delhi, 1972.
[54] Khwand Amir, *Humayun Nama*, tr. Baini Prashad, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940.

The most important Persian source available on Akbar's reign is undoubtedly Abul Fazl's *Akbar Nama.*[55] The *Akbar Nama*, which literally means History of Akbar, is a biographical account of Akbar, written in Persian. It includes vivid and detailed descriptions of his life and times. The book was commissioned by Akbar. This massive work of Abul Fazl is a fountain of many important information on Akbar's attempt to stabilize the Empire, his gradual incorporation of several Rajput Rajas, chieftains and other such important men; the concept of a regular court became prominent from his period. It is helpful to understand that many of the court activities, celebrations and protocols at the court gradually became one of the dominant aspects of the Empire. This piece of work was written in order to create a kind of imperial cult and to transform the image of the emperor (Akbar) in ritual contexts especially by that of *jharoka darshan* when Abul Fazl compares Akbar with Jesus in His ability to heal the sick and diseased people and that in a similar way, the glimpse of Akbar from the *jharoka* balcony could heal his subjects coming from far and near and that there was a particular sect called *darshaniyas* who would not eat, drink anything before having the '*darshan'* of the emperor.

The third volume of the *Akbarnama* the *Ain-i-Akbari*[56] is of particular importance because regarding the court of Akbar, it throws immense light on the regulations for admission to the court, for performing saluations (*taslim* and *kornish*), on etiquette, the daily activities of Akbar, the celebrations at the court (*tuladan*, *Nauroz, Khushroz*, etc.), feasts, on mounting of the guard, on hunting and modes of amusement and music. Particularly interesting was his account of imperial animals, describing the way they were acquired through hunting and their training afterwards and that how Akbar without much difficulty was able to instruct the fiercest of the beasts. The special treatment allotted to the best quality of animals called *khasa* is something of much interest and reveals the fact that like the imperial nobles, the imperial animals were well-stratified too and received honours, and favours as per their performance and wish of the Emperor. Abul Fazl painstakingly gives a biography of each noble of the Empire and their escalation in the

[55] *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 3 vols., tr. H. Beveridge, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1902-39, rep. 2007.
[56] Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 2 vols., tr. H. Blochmann, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1927, 1949, rep. 2006.

Mughal court society or their disgraceful fall from the imperial favours. Everywhere he attempts to deify Akbar.

Another relevant work by the same author, Abul Fazl is *Mukatabat-i-Allami (Insha'i Abul Fazl) Daftar I: Letters of the Emperor Akbar in English Translation.*[57] It is is a collection of letters written by Fazl, at the orders of Akbar. The contents of letters are interesting and throw some new lights on Akbar's dealings with the rulers of foreign lands (especially with the Shah of Persia) and with his nobles and assertion of one's authority.

But Akbar's life and his innovations could not be well-understood without Abdul Qadir Badauni's work, *Muntakhab–ut Tawarikh.*[58] It is an unusually frank and critical account of Akbar's measures, particularly religious and his conduct. This book is written from the point of view of an orthodox Sunni Muslim and his disgust for Akbar's views on religion and his syncretise policy and several innovations brought at the court and for the Empire is evident from his writing. Nevertheless, his writing on Akbar's reign is very much relevant in order to understand the reign of Akbar in totality because on one hand, we have Abul Fazl, the official court chronicler of Akbar's period who extensively eulogises every single attempt of his patron and leaves no stone unturned to glorify the Emperor while on the other, we have Badauni who is extremely bitter towards Akbar due to the Emperor's treatment of the man and his subsequent fall from receiving Akbar's favours. Badauni is bitter towards Abul Fazl as well for he sees his fall was due to him. Badauni criticizes many of the orders issued by Akbar and calls them as his way to please Hindus whose support he wanted desperately.

Then we have Abul Qasim Namakin, *Munshaat-i-Namakin*[59] which is a collection of documents that was compiled during the last years of Akbar's reign. It contains letters of great importance. There was one letter addressed by Akbar to Shah Tahmasp sent some

[57] *Mukatabat-i-Allami (Insha'i Abul Fazl) Daftar I: Letters of the Emperor Akbar in English Translation*, ed. Mansura Haidar, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1998.
[58] Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, 3 vols., tr. George S. A Ranking, Karimsons, Karachi, 1976.
[59] *The Mughal State and Culture, 1556-1598: Selected Letters and Documents from Munshaat-i-Namakin, Manohar*, ed. Ahmad Ishtiyaq Zilli, New Delhi, 2007.

time in 1565 rejecting his suggestions to confer the titles of *Khan-i-Khanan* and *Sipah Salar* upon one of his nobles, Sultan Mahmud Bhakkari. The another letter was from Shah Tahmasp to Akbar making amends for having made an old request in an earlier letter that the titles of *Khan-i-Khanan* and *Sipah Salar* be conferred upon Sultan Mahmud Bhakkari. Thus the contents of the letter suggest that granting of titles to nobles was a sole right of the Emperor and it denoted one of his royal prerogatives. Not that the Emperor did not promote his officials on the basis of recommendations, but they were made by either high officials of his Empire, or by any of the royal members (princes or royal ladies). However, recommendations coming from foreign lands to him were indeed not acceptable because that meant the erosion of his authority.

The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*[60] throws light on the courtly life and the celebrations and rituals associated with the court of Akbar's son, Jahangir in vivid details. Jahangir had a number of copies made and distributed. Now giving a book from the imperial library was one of the valuable gifts showered upon the recipient and was seen as the royal favour to the man. The very first copy Jahangir gave to his son, Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) to honour him. Due to his ill-health, Jahangir could not concentrate on writing his memoirs and so instructed one of his nobles to write. Jahangir asked Mutamad Khan to write his memoirs. Again, allowing someone to record the Emperor's reign was considered to be one of the great favours shown by him and only the closest was given such an opportunity. Like in the earlier case, we see Abul Fazl, one of the close companions of Akbar, received this chance of documenting the reign of Akbar who, in gratitude, completely glorified the Emperor. His memoirs is full of examples of the awards of honours, ranks, exchange of costly gifts, the hunting expeditions he undertook and the number of animals he killed; his hunting expertise along with that of his father's and Nur Jahan's. He meticulously records all the valuable and rare gifts he received from his important nobles, Rajas, chieftains, zamindars, the subjugated rulers of Golconda, the ambassadors of Persia, Turkey, Uzbecs, etc. Interestingly, Jahangir who was very fond of Sir Thomas Roe and made him his disciple too, did not mention anything about him in his memoirs.

[60] Nur al-Din Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2 vols., tr. Alexander Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge, London, 1909-14, rep. 1989, New Delhi.

Inayat Khan's *Shaha Jahan Nama*[61] serves valuable information regarding the activities of the court of Shah Jahan. The book opens with the accession of the Emperor, Shah Jahan and his undertaking of many kingly functions like self-adornment with a high sounding title, granting of *mansabs* and *jagirs*, promotions, gifts, robes of honour and issuing of *farmans*, one of which forbade the observation of *sijda* and in place of it, he introduced *chahar-taslim*. The account gives a rich panorama of the reign, about the innumerable royal audiences at which the Emperor received the homage of the assembled nobles and grandees of his realm, as well as foreign ambassadors and travellers from all over the world-all in accordance with strict and intricate court etiquette. It captures the sense of pageantry that was such an integral part of courtly life, the minutiae of the Emperor's daily routine and elaborate court ceremonials like the annual *Navroz* festivals, the weighing against gold on the occasions of royal birthdays according to both the solar and the lunar calendars, and the great public displays at the time of the marriages of the noble princes.

Akham-i-Alamgiri [62] records the history of the first ten years of the reign of the Emperor Alamgir, written in 1688. It is the only official record we have for the reign of Aurangzeb because after the completion of the first decade of his rule, the Emperor forbade the author from continuing it any further. And since it is the only official record from his reign, the relevance of it increases automatically. It presents exactly the image that the Emperor desired to project for himself and the vast empire that he ruled.

Saqi Mustaid Khan's *Maasir-i-Alamgiri (Reign 1658-1707)*[63] is another work on Aurangzeb written unofficially. In spite of the fact, the author does not give any critical view of the period. But at the same time the nauseating flattery of the author is not evident. The author records the events as they occurred ranging from the prohibitions and sanctions Aurangzeb had introduced at his court to the treatment of Shivaji at his court. In all the events, Saqi Mustaid Khan justifies the actions of his Emperor calling them the

[61] Inayat Khan, *Shaha Jahan Nama,* trs. W. E. Bagley and Z. A. Desai, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1990.
[62] *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb (tr. of Akham-i-Alamgiri ascribed to Hamid-ud-din Khan Bahadur),* tr. Jadunath Sarkar, M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1925.
[63] Saqi Mustad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri, A History of the Emperor Aurangzeb-'Alamgir (reign 1658-1707 AD),* tr. Jadunath Sarkar, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1947.

necessity of the time and that His Majesty was more inclined towards the performance of his kingly functions and not much concerned with the outward worth.

To get a glimpse of Aurangzeb's courtly life as well as his private life *Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri*[64] which are a collection of his letters addressed to his sons, grandsons, and some high ranking nobles. In these letters Aurangzeb is found giving advice to his sons about the kingly duties, about the way they should conduct themselves and their treatment to the officials. The letters are relatively important because Aurangzeb very effectually forbade the recording of the events of his reign from the eleventh year of his rule and therefore, the various happenings of his time can only be traced through the means of letters on business and of notes taken secretively.

Another important source dealing with Aurangzeb's reign is Anees Jahan Syed's *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*. This is a study that consists the translation of the relevant sections of *Muntakhab-al Lubab* (upto 1688 A.D) along with a running comparison of Khafi Khan with Sadiq Khan and Mamuri. It begins with Aurangzeb's life as the Prince till his thirty-first regnal year (1687-88). It captures the various events occurring in his life and his kingly duties.

Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign 1659-1706,[65] edited by Dr. Yusuf Husain Khan is yet another source to study Aurangzeb's period. Out of the huge number of documents of Aurangzeb's reign in the Central Records Office, Hyderabad-Deccan, 168 documents have been selected for the present work. This is the third volume of the series comprising '*Selected Documents of Shah Jahan's Reign*', and '*Selected Waqai of the Deccan*'. The documents deal with various administrative matters, such as the presentation of *peshkash*, *nazr*, *nisar*, awards of *khilats*, titles, royal gifts, assignment of *jagirs*, grant of *mansabs*, promotions and demotions, appointment of the officials who were formerly in the service of Bijapur rulers and of Shivaji and also through the means of high *mansabs*, titles, and rewards, a number of high officials associated with the Qutub

[64] *Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri* or *Letters of Aurangzebe*, trs. H. Jamshid and B. A. Bilimoria, Idarah-i-Adabiyat -i-Delli, elhi, 1972.
[65] *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign 1659-1706*, ed. Yusuf Husain Khan, Central Record Office, Hyderabad, 1958.

Shahi and Adil Shahi courts and military leaders of Shivaji were persuaded to join the Mughal service.

Since the nobles were one of the important participants in the courtly culture, therefore, now let us look at the Persian accounts which are wholly dedicated to the Mughal nobility. The Mughal Empire had one of the world's most elaborate bureaucracies which were sustained by a network of rituals of compliance and duty towards the Emperor. In return, they were honoured and favoured and thus continued to be a part of the Mughal grandees. But this is also to be examined whether all the nobles complied or that some showed the signs of transgression and that if they defied, how they were treated. To understand the Mughal nobility closely, *The Maasir-ul-umara* of Nawab Samsam-ud-daula Shah Nawaz Khan and his son Abdul Hayy, and another, *Tazkiratul-Umara of Kewal Ram, Biographical Account of the Mughal Nobility 1556-1707 A.D.*[66] are useful in discovering their life histories, their rise and fall in the imperial service, and their responses to their standing in Mughal society which was heavily stratified.

Kewal Ram had compiled the biographies of about twelve hundred nobles beginning from the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) till that of Aurangzeb's. Biographies are very simple and brief, indicating the *mansab*, positions held, and successive promotions of each noble, place of posting. It is divided into two volumes. First volume deals with the Muslim nobility while the second covers the account of the Hindu nobility. The part of Muslim nobility is further divided on the basis of the ranks the nobles held. The high ranking nobles were dealt first, followed by the nobles of lower ranks but holding some titles and the last part comprises the nobles with lower ranks and with no titles. The section dealing with Hindu nobility is too divided but into two parts: one is on the nobles holding the titles and the second deals with those nobles who were not holding the titles. It contains a lot of biographies of nobles from Aurangzeb's period.

M. A. Ansari's *Administrative Documents of Mughal India,* covering the period from 1563-64 A.D. to 1858 is full of valuable information too regarding the bestowal of ranks,

[66] *Tazkiratul-Umara of Kewal Ram, Biographical Account of the Mughal Nobility 1556-1707 A.D.,* tr. S.M. Azizuddin Husain, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985.

titles, royal insignias like flags, and *naqqarah* to high-ranking nobles, recommendations made by ladies of the royal harem (Inayat Allah was recommended by Princess Zaib-al-Nisa to his royal father), visits paid by the Emperor to the residence of the nobles to honour them (Shah Jahan visited the residence of Jafar Khan) and sometimes also for *iyadat* (to enquire about the health of a sick noble) and other such methods of honouring a noble. The way the nobles were addressed like 'the cream among the equals and the peers...the worthy of the limitless kindness (Jai Singh)', etc. is also very enlightening.

We also have some significant documents of the Mughal ladies. *Edicts from the Mughal Harem* contains a unique collection of edicts issued by queen-Mothers like Hamida Banu, and Maryam Zamani, royal consorts like Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, by Prince's consort Nadira Banu and also by Princess like Jahan Ara from 1581 to 1680 A.D. The significance of the work lies in the fact that it throws a new light on the activities of the ladies of the Mughal harem for the Mughal official accounts hardly reveal much on the issue. The edicts reveal that the royal women participated in the politics of the state, made recommendations, awarded *khilats* (robes of honour), and so on. The edicts issued by the queen-Mothers and royal consorts were called *hukms* and they rank only next to the *farmans* issued by the Emperor. For an example Nur Jahan in appreciation of Raja Jai Singh's devotion had sent a *hukm for* him through Khwaja Ruz Bhan who also carried a special *khilat* for the Raja.

For the study of the later Mughal period, one of vital contemporary Persian account is Seid Gholam Hossein Khan's *Seir Mutaqherin.*[67] It begins with the war of succession after Alamgir's death. It deals with the political history of the last seven emperors of the Mughal empire. It shows the frequent tussle between the Emperor and his favourites on one side and the dominant section of the nobility for power and authority. The nobles

[67] Seid Gholam Hossein Khan, *The Seir Mutaqherin or Review of Modern Times Being an History of India containing in general the reigns of the Seven Last Emperors of Hindostan*, vol. I, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1926.

fought among themselves to acquire the post of either the *Wazir* or that of the *Mir Bakshi*. *Iqbalnama*[68] by an anonymous writer, *Shahnama-i-Munawwar Kalam,*[69]

The History of India, as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period,[70] written by H.M. Elliot and edited by John Dowson is in many volumes, containing important translated Persian works like *Tarikh-i-Hindi* by Rustam Ali, *Bayan-i-waki* of Khwaja Abdul Karim Khan, *Tazkirat-us-Salatin-i-Chaghtai* of M. Hadi Kamwar Khan, *Tarikh-i-Shahadat-i-Farrukh Siyar wa Julus-i-Muhammad Shahi* by Muhammad Bakhsh 'Ashub' throws light on the inferior treatment given to Muhammad Shah after Nadir Shah entered the imperial capital, indicating the Mughal Emperor as the dependent of the Persian Shah. From allotting the space for Muhammad Shah's residence in the Red fort to the manner regarding the provision of his food, all being a sign of the exercise of the authority of the conqueror.

The other Persian accounts which give details about the invasion of Nadir Shah and the defilement of the Mughal court can be found in *Bayan-i-waki* of Khwaja Abdul Karim Khan. The work also reveals that the nobles at the Mughal court who were divided into many factions, in their attempt to seize power in their hands were even willing to invite the external forces like the Wazir Safdar Jang called into the city Suraj Mal Jat who plundered the city and meanwhile, the Wazir secretively had Javed Khan, the eunuch who was his powerful opponent at the court, murdered.

However, written chiefly to celebrate their power and magnificence, highlighting on *durbars*, processions, long and elaborate lists of gifts received and presented at the court from a variety of men, and expensive jewels, the official Mughal chronicles can appear to some extent one dimensional. The Mughal court chroniclers work had to be checked and approved by the Emperor or by a designated official. E.g. the name of Qazwini's massive

[68] *Iqbalnama by an anonymous contemporary writer*, tr. S. H. Askari., Janaki Prakashan, Patna, New Delhi, 1983.
[69] Shiv Das Lakhnawi, *Shahnama-i-Munawwar Kalam*, Janaki Prakshan, Patna, 1980.
[70] *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, vol. VI, eds. Elliot, H. M. and Dowson, John, Islamic Book House, Lahore, Ist pub.1867, rpt. 1979.
The History of India, as Told by its Historians. The Mohammadan Period, vols. VII, VIII, eds. Elliot, H. M. and Dowson, John, Trubner and Co., London, 1877.

work, entitled *Padshahnama*, was decided upon by the Emperor himself. Therefore, the tendency of concealment among the court chroniclers is evident. European travellers' accounts on the Mughal court provide a great counterpart to the Mughal court's own writings. Since the European travellers were not writing to please the reigning Emperor, and were not obliged to confirm to any patron in Hindustan, therefore, they were more explicit in recording the flaws in the Empire, the corrupt officials, the competing palace factions and plots for assassinating their rivals, and scandals. Bernier was an educated and aristocratic French doctor who became much sought after as a physician by the Mughal royal family. Bernier constantly contrasts Mughal India and 17th c. France.

Nonetheless, while dealing with the European travelogues, one needs to be cautious enough for they were from a completely dissimilar environment and examined the surroundings more as an outsider than as a part of the existing system of a new world. They relentlessly contrasted the way the things worked back in their lands with those found in Hindustan and on countless occasions, were either disappointed or flabbergasted by them. Manucci in his work while highlighting the reasons for his writing, says, 'I should never have done were I to recount all the frauds and hypocrisies of this king. But, after all, since I have undertaken to give some stories, as much to entertain my reader as to inform him of the frailties and virtues of mankind, the life of this monarch of Hindustan furnishes me with ample store.' There are certain things we need to keep in mind when dealing with European travelogues. For examples, what were the motives of writing accounts by the writers? Was it to attract the attention of the people of writer's native country? Because the Europeans at the Mughal court addressed European employers or friends rather than Indian readers and none wrote to any of the Indian nobles. Were the writers following any set rules for writing the accounts? What the writers generally were attempting to seek? Was for them to evoke the interest of their countrymen, the marvels and curiosities more important? How different were they from us? Did they record the account with an open mind, with objectivity or were they entangled with pre-conceived mind? Was the account of the writers influenced by their predecessors? How far a writer from a different land could understand the culture or different dimensions related to the land he wrote about? We also need to understand their possible personal benefitting motives and therefore, it is important to examine the context of such descriptions before taking them as factual. Like Sir Thomas Roe was a diplomat

and Norris was more interested in getting some commercial gains from the Mughal Emperor for his Company. While Catholic missionaries like Monserrate and others were seeking religious influence and tried to convert Akbar. Did the treatment received by him at the court or by the nobles or the failure of embassy bring any frustration in the writing as well? The travellers or ambassadors did not have prior knowledge about the land they went unlike in today's age wherein the market is flooded with travel guide books and the modern ambassadors equip themselves well with the information about the country they go to. They had come to India for a short period of time, information they collected or source of information was bazaar gossip. Edward Norris, the ambassador at the court of Aurangzeb tried to equip himself with the information regarding the court norms and protocols through his European friends. But some were actually present at the Mughal court and nearly attended the court regularly like Sir Thomas Roe, and Bernier and seen the developments of the happenings, the culture, customs of the empire quite closely. Some also got the opportunity to interact with the nobles quite often. Bernier was placed under the care of Danishmand Khan, who was one of the chief nobles of Shah Jahan's reign. Amusingly, Indian sources are silent on the Europeans who had visited the court of the Mughals. Only the visits of the ambassadors and travellers coming from the Islamic world and the neighbouring territories are recorded.

We do not have any European source for the peripatetic phase of the Empire. John Mildenhall and Ralph Fitch (in 1585) were the two important Europeans to visit the court of Akbar. *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, edited by William Foster[71] gives a brief introduction to the Europeans who had come to the courts of the three Mughal Emperors: Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan. *Letters from the Mughal Court, The First Jesuit Mission to Akbar (1580-1583)*[72] contain the earliest impressions of the Mughal empire ever recorded by European writers. The scarcity of contemporary accounts of India in the days of Akbar, apart from the court chronicles, lends additional importance to these letters, for they report in part information unobtainable from other sources. They shed an intimate light on the character and mind of the emperor, and afford the reader an insight into the general conditions of life in Mughal times.

[71] *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, ed. Foster William, Low Price Publications, 1921.
[72] *Letters from the Mughal Court, The First Jesuit Mission to Akbar (1580-1583),* ed. John Correira-Afonso, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash Anand, 1980.

The Empire of the Great Mogol written by Joannes De Laet[73] who was the Flemish geographer, deals with the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir and records the events of the court of Agra and the celebrations there with special reference to *Nauroz* and the Emperor' birthdays. Though he had personally never visited the court of Akbar or of Jahangir, but he had collected a range of information from other accounts to write his own.

The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619[74] is a valuable contribution to the courtly life of Jahangir's period. Roe was a successful English diplomat. He was in near daily attendance in the court and camp of Jahangir for almost three years (1615-1618). He established an affable relation with the Emperor by becoming one of Jahangir's favourite drinking partners. He selected and initiated him among his favored nobles. He describes not only the grand court of Jahangir but also of the Mughal princes and the provincial governors and that how the manners and protocols at these courts were similar to the majestic court of Jahangir. Roe often contrasts the courtly behaviour of the men at the Mughal court with that of the English. He was in particular surprised by the gift ceremony. According to him it was against the English etiquette to demand gifts which the Emperor did every day for letting him enter his *durbar* which as per the Mughal court etiquette was an obligation and a symbolic act, to indicate the depressed position of the giver of the gift before the Emperor. Since Roe was one of the favoured men of Jahangir, therefore, he had an opportunity to record the Emperor's life in more details and he notes certain things about him which we don't come across in other European accounts, not even in the Emperor's autobiography. One such information was his fondness for playing cards, and that how he was forgetful sometimes, giving orders to his nobles to do something in his absent-mindedness and then later in his rage, admonishing and punishing them actually doing it. The account also records Jahangir's daily court activities, festivities, the receptions of the Persian ambassadors and others from different foreign lands, and use of animals to punish defaulters, and many other absorbing details of Jahangir's period. Another English

[73] Joannes De Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, tr. J.S. Hoysland, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1928.
[74] *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619*, ed. William Foster, Hakluyt Society, London, 1899.

ambassador's account which be useful and throws some light on the ambassadorial visits to the Mughal court is *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702.*[75]

Francois Bernier's *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 1656-68[76] is an indispensible source covering the latter phase of Shah Jahan and the reign of Aurangzeb. He wrote a series of letters addressed to his friends and officials in France, informing different facets of these two reigns. In one of the letters addressed to Monsieur de la Mothe Le Vayer in 1663, he makes a comparison between Agra and Paris and describes the imperial court life during Aurangzeb's reign, the daily routine he followed, the royal paraphernalia, and the rich lifestyles of the *umara*. He also portrays the court life of Aurangzeb's father Shah Jahan's time and explains the *darbars*. In a series of letters written to M. De Merveilles, he talks about his observation on the imperial encampment. He also records that how the court etiquette was sometimes used as a means to terminate the unwanted elements at the court and that how imperial favour led to the war of succession between Dara and Aurangzeb.

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's *Travels in India (1640-67)*[77] contains a wealth of information and has been frequently reprinted. He gives an interesting account of the political rivalries, plots at the imperial court, pretence of loyalty of the princes towards their royal father just to gain the imperial favours. He writes, in his first volume, that Prince Khurram by way of submission to his father attained his ends (i.e., to sit on the Mughal throne) more conveniently. His description concerning the details of the Mughal court in the time of Aurangzeb, his style of eating and sleeping, his thrones, daily activities, guarding of the palace, his birthday celebrations, the imperial animals with a special reference to elephants, etc. is very gripping. A portion of the second volume contains details regarding the diamonds and rubies he had seen in Europe and Asia and especially the ones, the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb owned.

Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*[78] is helpful in drawing a contrast between the courts of the Shah of Persia and of the Mughals. Since he was in the service of Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, therefore he had seen the events in Dara's life quiet closely. He

[75] *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702*, Harihar Das, Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1959.
[76] Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 1656-68, tr. Irving Brock, New Delhi, 1891.
[77] Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 2 vols., tr. V. Ball., ed. William Crooke, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, rep. 2007.

[78] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor*, 4 vols, tr. W. Irvine, New Delhi, 1907, rep. 1981.

reveals that how Dara after the Battle of Samugarh was suspicious of every man around him and even doubted the fidelity of one of his loyal officials, Daud Khan because of the fragile nature of the service and loyalty in court politics. He also gives an insight into the Mughal camp of Aurangzeb, his courtly life, daily activities, etc.

Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri (Being the third part of the travels of M. De Thevenot into the Levant and the third part of a voyage the world by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri)[79] is an another significant travellogue which deals with the power and grandeur of the Empire but also shows that how the nobles, in lieu of gifts, disobeyed the royal orders secretly. Nonetheless, Thevenot was highly impressed by Aurangzeb's daily activities. J. Ovington too in *A Voyage to Surat in the year 1689*[80] in the section 'Of The Great Mogul 'gives a brief account of the court of Aurangzeb, the weighing ceremony, court flattery, encampment and the rebellion of his son, Akbar and his subsequent flight to Persia. His report on the imperial animals, particularly that of the elephants and the way they were procured, the allowance of food to them which was stately, their paraphernalia, etc. was useful in understanding how the imperial animals also aided in adding splendour to the Empire.

Fragments of information on Mughal court and life can be collected from Francois Martin's *India in the 17th c. (Social, Economic and Political)*[81] who especially takes note of the Mughal trend of making expensive gifts to the Emperor and also to the officials of the Empire. John Fryer's work *A New Account of East India and Persia in Eight Letters being Nine Years Travels*[82] is not of particular help for the reconstruction of the history of courtly culture of the Mughals. He had dealt with political aspect of the Empire, but what the court was like or what were the rules followed at the court by the people attending the *durbar* is not recorded. Perhaps due to the fact that Fryer never visited the court of the Mughals personally, therefore, his observation on the matter is lacking. Nevertheless, he

[79] *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri (Being the third part of the travels of M. De Thevenot into the Levant and the third part of a voyage the world by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri)*, ed. Sen, Surendranath, Govt. of India, National Archives of India, Queensway, New Delhi, 1949.
[80] J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the year 1689*, ed. H.G., Oxford University Press, London : Humphery Milford, 1929.
[81] Francois Martin, *India in the 17th c. (Social, Economic and Political)*, 2 vols., Part I (1670-1674), tr. Lotika, Varadarajan Manohar, 1981.
[82] John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia in Eight Letters being Nine Years Travels*, Periodical Experts Book Agency, Delhi, 1698.

gives a fair amount of information regarding the court of the Shah of Persia which is helpful in bringing out a contrast between the two important courts of the time.

Other important accounts like *The Commentary of Father Monserrate on his Journey to the Court of Akbar in the Year 1580,*[83] *The Jesuits and The Great Mogul,*[84] and others can be used for understanding relevant aspects of the court and its different facets.

Rajasthani sources can also be useful to understand the court culture of the Rajput states and to examine protocols, palace routines, the exchange of honours and courtesies, courtly sensibilities etc., and to interpret their role in the making of a definite state structure. The study can help in bringing parallels between the courts of the Mughals and those of the Rajputs. *Jodhpur Rajya ki Dastur Bahi*[85] discusses courtly protocols observed at the court of Jodhpur and also the placement of other Rajput rulers and nobles of Jodhpur in the protocols on their arrival at the fort and in the formal *darbar*, reflecting the relationship shared by the ruler of Jodhpur with his nobles and with other Rajput states. *Veer Vinod* by Kaviraj Shyamaldas[86] tells us about ceremonies like coronation, *tika*, *tuladan*, and also their relations with the Mughals and the efficacy of rituals in building it like the investiture of authority by the Mughal Emperor to a subjugated Rajput ruler through the means of the symbolic acts and objects, etc. The other works like *Bikaner ri Khyat,*[87] *Dalpat Vilas,*[88] *मारवाड़ राजघराने की पुरालेखीय सामग्री*[89], and *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*[90] are used for the study.

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[83] Antonio Monserrate, The Commentary of Father Monserrate on his Journey to the Court of Akbar in the Year 1580, tr. J.S. Hoyland, Cuttack, 1922.

[84] Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and The Great Mogul*, Vintage Books, Gurgaon, 1932, rep. 1990.

[85] विक्रमसिंह राठौड़, जोधपुर राज्य की दस्तूर बही, राजस्थानी शोध संस्थान, जोधपुर, १९९४ ।

[86] Mahamahopadhyay Kaviraj Shyamaldas, *Vir Vinod: Mewar ka Itihas*, vol. II, Part II & III, Motilal Banarsidas, New Delhi, 1986.

[87] *बीकानेर री ख्यात, महाराजा सूजानसिंह से महाराजा रतनसिंह (ई॰1700 - 1851ई॰)*, संपादक हुकमसिंह भाटी, राजस्थानी शोध संस्थान, जोधपुर, २००५ ।

[88] सारस्वत, दळपत (संपादक), *दळपत विलास*, सादूल राजस्थानी रिसर्च इन्स्टीट्यूट, बीकानेर, १९६० ई.

[89] *मारवाड़ राजघराने की पुरालेखीय सामग्री*, स॰ महेंद्र सिंह नगर, महाराजा मानसिंह पुस्तक प्रकाश शोध-केंद्र, मेहरानगढ़ म्यूजियम ट्रस्ट, जोधपुर, २०१०।

[90] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, vol. II, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1832, rep. 1957.

For the present work, some catalogues of the *Vakil* reports, *arzdashts*, collected from the Rajasthan State Archives have been used. In order to be constantly informed of the happenings at the Mughal court, the princes, nobles, provincial governors, mansabdars, etc. had appointed and posted their representatives there. The rulers of the Rajputana who were in the Mughal service too had such arrangements and the correspondence which had happened between them and their representatives now constitute an important historical source, preserved in the museums. *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur*,[91] *A Descriptive List of the Arzdashts (Persian) Addressed by the Various Officials to the Rulers of Jaipur (1707 to 1720 A.D.)*,[92] *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur*[93] are useful for understanding the vigilance observed by all members of the court whether present at the court or stationed outside the imperial capital city with respect to the happenings of every single event at the court, from the bestowal of the awards, titles, *khilats*, ceremonial objects to the naming of a new-born child of a prince or a noble by the Emperor.

Farmans and *nishans* constitute a very significant source for understanding aspects of the Mughal court society. The Rajasthan State Archives published a collection of such imperial documents preserved at the archives, translated from Persian into Hindi, compiled under the title, *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक.*[94] A *Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans addressed by the Imperial Mughals to the Prince of Rajasthan*[95] is also used. A facsimile of one *Yaddasht* informing the conferment of the titles i.e. the title of Asaf-ud-daulah to Abdullah Khan and the title of Amir-ul-umara to Saiyyid Husian Ali Khan, along with the award of a

[91] *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur*, (Rajasthani), Rajasthan State Archives, Govt. of Rajasthan, Bikaner, 1974.

[92] *A Descriptive List of the Arzdashts (Persian) Addressed by the Various Officials to the Rulers of Jaipur (1707 to 1720 A.D.)*, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

[93] *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur*, vol. I (Persian), Rajasthan State Archives, Govt. of Rajasthan, Bikaner, 1967.

A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur, vol. II (Persian), Rajasthan State Archives, Govt. of Rajasthan, Bikaner, 1972.

[94] *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक*, संपादक खड़गावत, महेंद्र, भाग-१ और भाग-२, शुजाउद्दीन खां नक्शबंदी अनुवादक, निदेशालय, राजस्थान राज्य अभिलेखागार, बीकानेर, २०१० ।

महेंद्र खड़गावत (संपादक), *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक*, भाग-3, शुजाउद्दीन खां नक्शबंदी अनुवादक, निदेशालय, राजस्थान राज्य अभिलेखागार, बीकानेर, २०१५ ।

[95] *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans addressed by the Imperial Mughals to the Prince of Rajasthan*, Directorate of Archives, Govt. of Rajasthan, Bikaner.

sword and *padak* to Maharaja Ajit Singh of Marwar and Mirza Raja of Amber from the Bikaner State Archives is utilized to corroborate the work.

Some attempts have been made to incorporate the *Hukamnamas* of the Sikh Gurus such as *Zafar Namah of Guru Gobind Singh Maharaj addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb, Letters from the Last Sikh Guru to the Last Moghul Emperor*[96] and *Hukamnamas of Guru Tegh Bahadur: A Historical Study*[97] which can also be utilized for the reconstruction of the Mughal history. Unfortunately, not enough scholarly attention has been paid towards it.

The manuscript, *'The Baghela Dynasty of Rewah'*, written by Tulasidas, published by Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India is an important source to understand on one hand, the means by which the Mughal emperor expressed their authority to the local rajas and on the other, how the local rajas responded to such authority, how the imperial gifts and honours on the occasions of coronations, birthdays, etc of these rajas were grabbed as an opportunity by them to display their close association with the 'lord of the earth'.

Painting is another source material which I have utilized in my work in an attempt to make my submissions comprehensible. Since the Mughal Emperors took personal interest in the paintings they commissioned, therefore they could be equally as instrumental in the re-construction of the Mughal history as the literary sources. But the complex vocabulary they had built through the means of visual representations is, indeed, a tough arena to explore. Several Art Historians have been engaged in the process of decoding the world of the Mughal paintings.

Organisation of the Study

The thesis is divided into six chapters followed by a conclusion.

Chapter one, Evolution of the Great Mughals: Imperial Ideology, Allegory and Illusion shows that how even though monarchy is a man-made institution but by a series of rituals

[96] *Zafar Namah of Guru Gobind Singh Maharaj addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb, Letters from the Last Sikh Guru to the Last Moghul Emperor*, tr. Baba Sahib of Dera Baba Nanak, Baba P. L. Bedi, Unity Book Club of India, New Delhi.
[97] Sabinderjit Singh Sagar, *Hukamnamas of Guru Tegh Bahadur: A Historical Study*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2002.

which were constitutive of imperial ideology, it was made to believe that monarchy was not made but was born, chosen by God and this could be achieved because rituals are transforming in character. A monarch is transformed into a divine or semi-divine figure; his genealogy, his public image, his dreams, etc were a part of a divine favour to him. This led to demarcation among men in which the monarch with his divine attributes is placed at the highest pedestal of hierarchy. Myths and rituals also aided in creating further demarcation among monarchs. A monarch had to look for ways to establish his areas of influence and continue expanding the support base. But the territorial expansion had to have a legitimate cause. Therefore, the concept of hierarchy among rulers was devised by the means of which a true ruler is authorized to invade and conquer the territory of a false ruler and bring him under subjugation. Accordingly, those who collaborated with the true ruler were individuals who belonged to 'civilized' section of the society whereas dissenters were the ones who had flouted the will of God and thus were required to be chastised.

It seeks to understand the metamorphosis of a human into semi-divine or divine monarch and also attempts to illustrate the correlation between imperial ideology and royal rituals and that multiple elaborated rituals were a signifier of a highly stratified society. Rituals vary in correspondence with the way in which the imperial ideology is constituted. The chapter attempts to examine that how in sync with imperial ideology, rituals created a larger than life image of a king, creating and validating myths, generating specific social order, modes of behaviour, etc. It also tries to show that whether rituals were reflective of the true character or personality of the reigning monarch or were reflective of the constructed image of him; and that categorizing a ruler as a 'liberal' or 'orthodox' can be misleading towards our attempt to understand his personality.

Chapter two, Architectural Space, Symbolism and Iconography seeks to understand how architectural space constituted a part of Mughal imperial ideology and that how physical setting of the court created and promoted a gradation of sacredness which in turn preserved the concepts of Mughal kingship. Perceiving their imperial capital cities as the axis mundi, the Mughals attempted to project their domain as the Utopian world of perfect peace and harmony where the fiercest and the meekest survived together tranquilly. The architectural structures commissioned by the Mughal Emperors alluded to paradisiacal connotation and the architectural space of the imperial court was reflective of

this. The chapter examines symbols and iconography (borrowed from various sources) and architectural settings supporting the notions of Mughal sovereignty.

Chapter three, Court and the Creation and Re-creation of the Relations of Dominance and Subjugation deals with the gradual process of the development of the Mughal court from its peripatetic phase (i.e. the court in Babur and Humayun's times) to the reign of Aurangzeb and discusses the creation of the ambience of the court with the aid of symbols of royalty (*aftabgir*/parasol, *naqqara* or kettledrum, *tuman togh*/yak tail, etc.), protocols, forms of salutation (*kornish*,*taslim*, *sijda*, and *zaminbos*), seating arrangements, modes of acceptable behaviour, speech and mannerisms, festivals and ceremonials (coronation, *Navroz*, *tuladan*, birthdays, etc.), *tika* ceremony, exchange of gifts (*nazr* and *peshkash*), and the placement of the actor, the participants and the spectators in them. The section will simultaneously trace the evolution and influences of ceremonies and rituals, marriage processions, etc and the innovations brought by the emperor: *taslim* and *kornish*).

The chapter also aims to look at how the concepts of sovereignty were expressed through rituals. The architectural space of the court and the bodily space of the emperor were transformed and obtained the aura of sanctity, thus legitimizing the power and authority of the emperor and that how the practical concerns of kingship, power and hierarchy were achieved through myths, symbols, rituals and metaphors entrenched in them. And once the notion of sanctity of the emperor and his court was established via semiotic codes prevalent in the performance of the rituals and ceremonials and etiquette, the Emperor could extend his sanctity to his men and objects, making them the beneficiary of his sanctity. Now the person of the emperor and the ambience of the court could be conveniently recreated anywhere through his *farmans,* gifts, etc. even in the absence of him and his court, merging the practical or the rational world with the imaginary world and creating and securing the services and faithfulness of the nobles and projecting his public image. Also, it tries to understand how the lure of gifts, awards of ranks and titles, prospect of promotions, etc and making the recipient obliged to respond suitably to the honours and favours bestowed upon him by the Emperor aided the latter in expanding his area of influence. It shows how rituals and traditions played a significant role in creating a specific order of men attending his court.

Chapter four, Embassies and the Diplomatic Missions is a study of the diplomatic missions exchanged between the rulers for different purposes. The details concerning the kind of reception accorded to an envoy by a host ruler and his placement in the court ritual performance, the number of days he was entertained, the kinds of gift he received and the evaluation of the offering of the gifts of the ambassador and most importantly, the choice gifts sent by his ruler, modes of salutation, protocols, the vigilant monitoring of his demeanour, etc. are discussed and an endeavour is made to perceive the intended implications of the observation of such practices and that they were not mere performative acts but carried an ulterior motive of positioning the relation among the rulers and also, with the subordinated local overlords.

Chapter five, Imperial Camp: Mobile Court and the Omnipresence of the Emperor and his Court shows how the colour, the size of the tents, equipage, the precise locations of pitching tents of the Emperor, royal members, nobles, *mansabdars*, soldiers, etc. structured court relations and how the mobile court was an effective imperial tool to foster an imperial image that was all-pervading and this notion was obtained even in the absence of the imperial presence. As the architectural setting of the court reflected concepts of hierarchy and control and domination, the camp arrangement and setting were equally reflective of the same.

The last chapter, Court and the Later Mughals looks at the disruption of the practices and beliefs which were earlier created and recreated between the Emperor and the elites, and between the Emperor and his subjects through various court ceremonies and rituals of subordination. In the later phase though there was the continuance of the court rituals and protocols but they were reduced in numbers and in splendour. Earlier the meaning of ritual performance was clear (the actor was the emperor while the participant was his inferior) but now owing to the tussle between the emperor and his nobles for power the meaning or the 'negotiated space'[98] of the court rituals were open to various interpretations and ambiguities.

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[98] Michelle Maskielle and Adrienne Mayor, 'Early Modern Legends of Poison Khila'ts in India', ed. Stewart Gordon, *Robes of Honour, Khilat in Pre-colonial and Colonial Period*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 20.

CHAPTER I

'This king is a great magician: he rules even over the minds of his subjects...'

—Montesquieu[99]

What Montesquieu, a French political philosopher during the Age of Enlightenment, had written about the French king, Louis XIV, can also be applied to what Abul Fazl had said about his Mughal Emperor, Akbar. Every great and successful ruler of his time had deployed mechanisms and ideologies to govern the land and its people and most importantly, their minds. Historians, sociologists, political theorists, etc., have been trying to understand how ideology and cognitive dimension play a vital role in legitimation process in the act of governance for any form of government.

Following the rule of the Mughals, the British colonial power in India in order to legitimize its imperial control had put forward the notion that the Mughal state in medieval India was tyrannical and despotic whereas the British rule was represented as a 'harbinger of equality and freedom'.[100] Muhammad Habib views such a notion as a 'colonial ploy', aimed at portraying the Indian rulers incompetent 'to render good and rational governance to their subjects'.[101] However, the colonial ploy had proved quite successful in terms of its impact on the colonists. D.K. Fieldhouse, a historian mainly dealing with the study of colonial empires, while reflecting on the foundation on which the colonial power was established, opines: 'The basis of imperial authority was the mental attitude of the colonist. His acceptance of subordination—whether through a

[99]Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch, Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, tr. J. E. Anderson, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973, p. 29.
[100] John Dowson, the editor of *The History of India, as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, in support of this view wrote, 'We have already, within half-a-century of our dominion, done more for the substantial benefit of the people, than our predecessors, in the country of their own adoption, were able to accomplish in more than ten times that period.' Shivangini Tandon, Imperial Control and the Translation Project: Appropriation of Medieval Sources in British Writings on India, *Indian History Review*, vol. 41, No. 2, Dec. 2014, ICHR, Sage Publication, p. 226.
[101] Ibid., p. 229.

positive sense of common interest with the parent state, or through inability to conceive of any alternative—made empire durable.'[102]

This could be elaborated from an extract from Memorial to the British King in Council by six Bengali gentlemen (*bhadralok*) against the Press Ordinance passed by the Acting Governor-General in Council in 1823 as against the increasing criticisms of the British by the newspapers, giving an assurance to the King of the loyalty of the natives. It says: 'The greater part of Hindustan having been for several centuries subject to Muhammadan Rule, the civil and religious rights of its original inhabitants were constantly trampled upon, and from the habitual oppression of the conquerors, a great body of their subjects in the southern Peninsula (Dukhin), afterwards called Marhattas, and another body in the western parts now styled Sikhs, were at last driven to revolt; and when the Mussulman power became feeble, they ultimately succeeded in establishing their independence...Divine Providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yoke of those tyrants, and to receive the oppressed Natives of Bengal under its protection. Having made Calcutta the capital of their dominions, the English distinguished this city by such peculiar marks of favour, as a free people would be expected to bestow, in establishing an English Court of Judicature, and granting to all within its jurisdiction, the same civil rights as every Briton enjoys in his native country; thus putting the Natives of India in possession of such privileges as their forefathers never expected to attain, even under Hindu Rulers.'[103] The extract clearly shows that a section of colonists in British Colonial India echoed a similar view as the colonial power had on the rule of its predecessor state and that they appreciated and felt deeply indebted for what British rule had done for the country and also they had attached higher hopes and aspirations from the British governance.

Another vital aspect of legitimation process is to preserve some very fundamental customs and traditions of the predecessor rather than replacing them completely with those of alien ones; the only change perceptible was the change in actor (the lead

[102] D.K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the 18th Century*, Houndmills; Macmillan, rep. 1991, p. 103.
[103] *Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule, 1821-1918*, ed. Majumdar, J. K, Calcutta Oriental Press, Calcutta, p. 15.

performer). Bernard S. Cohn in his work[104] shows how the ruling elites of Europe in order to legitimize their power had incorporated the traditions of their respective colonized societies. In accordance with this line of thought, in 1876 Queen Victoria of England was proclaimed Empress of India and as per the traditional Mughal custom of holding *durbars*, all the local potentates had to personally come and attend the *durbars* with the customary gift of *peshkash* or *nazr* which was a clear mark of their subordination. Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy of British India, during his tenure was in charge of making all required arrangements for such *durbars*, in a letter to Lord Beaconsfield, had written:

> I am afraid I may have seemed fussy or frivolous about the decorative details of the Delhi Assemblage...The decorative details of an Indian pageant are like those parts of an animal which are no use at all for butchers' meat, and are even unfit for scientific dissection, but from which augurs draw the omens that move armies and influence princes.[105]

Thus by adopting age-old customs, local chieftains and rajas were coaxed to believe that no damage is done to the continuity of their tradition. The compelling effect of such an act was visible in the attitude of men who attended these *durbars*. In the coronation *durbar* of King George V on 12 December, 1911, the manner in which the King was approached by the men who had appeared for the occasion reflected their submissive attitude. "Some bare-headed people approached the dais and bent themselves double before the thrones that, a short time before, had been occupied by the King-Emperor and the Queen-Empress. Their attitude was so reverent that it almost seemed that the 'white Maharaja and Maharani' had been included in the Hindu pantheon...and that their devotees were performing worship (*puja*) before the empty chairs..."[106]

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[104] Bernard S. Cohen, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 185-207.
[105] *India and the Durbar*, A Reprint of the Indian Articles in the 'Empire Day' Edition of the THE TIMES, 24 May 1911, Macmillan and Co., Ltd. St. Martin's Street, London, 1911.
[106] Robert Frykenberg, 'The Coronation Durbar of 1911: Some Implications', ed. Robert Frykenberg, *Delhi through the Ages*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, p. 229.

In every kind of society, be it a court society, a colonial, an industrial or capitalist, the need to legitimize power to govern is foremost and this is where ideology plays an integral part in legitimizing 'the domination of one group or class over another'.[107] The legitimation process of the Mughals was not very dissimilar to the British colonial power in India in some aspects, viz., both had decried the vanquished state's capability to govern and appropriated some of the significant pre-existing customs and traditions of the conquered. By the time the Mughals arrived into the Indian subcontinent in the sixteenth century from the Central Asia (present Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), the centralized power of the *Khalifa* was declining.[108] The Caliphal power then rested with the Ottomans who were at constant enmity with the Safavids of Persia because the Persians were emerging more powerful politically and culturally. According to J.N. Sarkar, 'Persia was the France of the east, the radiating centre, the springhead of the culture, thought and fashion of the entire Islamic world'.[109] Therefore, the loosening grip of the *Khalifa* over the whole of the Islamic world and the rise of the Persian power and high culture led to a shift and also in the expansion in the sources of legitimacy. The Mughals were drawing inspirations to validate their rule and authority from varied sources, viz., the Muslim caliphal, Koranic prophetic and mystical Sufi; Achaemenian and Sasanian Persian, and Perso-Islamic; Turko-Mongolian; Hindu and Islamic Indian; and Christian-Messianic and also European concepts of universal monarchy.[110] To understand the multiple sources and mechanisms for validating a monarch's power to rule, it is important to first look at the concepts relating to the origin of monarchy and how the genesis led to the formulation of functions of a monarch and also to demarcation of various kinds, attempting to legitimize the power of the monarch.

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[107] Brian Morris, *Anthropological Studies of Religion, An Introductory Text*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 122.

[108] Before the Mughals, the Sultans of Delhi who had come from the Islamic Caliphate regions were dependent on the *Khalifa*, their political superior, for deriving legitimacy for their actions. Earlier, when Muhammad Bin Qasim gave the Hindus at Sind the status of *zimmis*, the Caliphal governor of Iraq, Hajjaj, immediately reproached him for disobeying the sacred injunction to decapitate the unbelievers. Later he was convinced by Qasim that it was wiser to utilize the conquered inhabitants as *Khiraj-guzars* of the state than to exterminate them ruthlessly. Anil Chandra Banerjee, *The State and Society in Northern India, 1206-1526*, K P Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, New Delhi, 1982, p. 13.

[109] Ananda Bhattacharya, 'Indo-Iranian Cultural Heritage in the Context of Sufism', *The Icfai University Journal of History and Culture*, vol. IV, Nos. 1 and 2, January and April 2010, pp. 199-120.

[110] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology, Collected Essays*, Oxford University Press, 2001, New Delhi, p. 130.

Theory of Sovereignty: Genesis

The genesis of kingship is quite primordial[111] and theories for its origin primarily emphasize the need to bring social stability and order and annihilate chaos and anarchy by protecting the weak from the strong.[112] The Mughals too validated the existence of monarchy in the same light. [113] Abul Fazl, Akbar's court chronicler, wrote, '...royalty is a remedy for the spirit of rebellion, and the reason why subjects obey. Even the meaning of the word Padishah shows this; for pad signifies stability and possession, and shah means origin, lord. A king is, therefore, the origin of stability and possession. If royalty did not exist, the storm of strife would never subside, nor does selfish ambition disappear.'[114] U. N. Day considers the possibility of Abul Fazl drawing his inspiration for such a concept from the Mahabharata due to the similarities in them. In the *Santiparva* of the *Mahabharata*, the warrior-sage Bhisma, tracing the origin of kingship, tells that in the pre-monarchical time people were governed by the principle of *matsyanyaya* i.e., bigger fish devouring little fish and that it was only after the establishment of the monarchical rule, the king restored order and made people to follow the *dharma*.[115] The logic of *matsyanyaya* was used in other classical Indian texts which had emphasized that 'a country without a king is cursed with every holocaust from the merely despairing (barbarian invasion, drought, and pestilence) to the insufferable (an insecurity of personal

[111] The oldest ancient Indian account available on its origin is the Aitareya Brahmana which says that kingship was an outcome of the enmity between gods and demons and that the gods were being oppressed by the demons. Finally as a measure to save themselves, they chose Soma as their king and thereafter, the situation turned into their favour. Nicholas Kazanas, *Economic Principles in the Vedic Tradition*, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 2010, p. 45.

[112] Kautilya in his work *The Arthashastra* put forward a theory for the origin of kingship by stating that before the onset of the institution of monarchy, individuals had unlimited and undefined rights and because strong and commanding men overpowered the weak, it resulted into a state of utter anarchy. Such a situation of confusion and disorder called for the establishment of some kind of social and political order. As a result of which monarchy came into being. Narain Singh Kalota, *India as Described by Megasthenes*, Concept Publishing Company, Delhi, 1978, pp. 80-81.

[113] The notion that the king was the protector of his subjects was reflective in the Sultanate period of Delhi as well. Isami, the author of *Futuhu's Salatin or Shah Namah-i Hind* calls Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq as the protector of his subjects. *Futuhu's Salatin or Shah Namah-i Hind of Isami*, ed. Agha Mahdi Husain, vol. III, Aligarh Muslim University Press, Aligarh, 1977, p. 647.

[114] Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, tr. H. Blochmann, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1927, 1949, rep. 2006, p. 2.

[115] U. N. Day, *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1971, rep. 1990, pp. 185-6.

property, a lapse in the teaching of the Vedas, and the inability to give daughters in marriage)'.[116] Hence, kingship was a solution.

Another historian from Akbar's reign, Muhammad Qandhari, too gives a similar kind of explanation for the need for kingship. 'The world cannot remain without a king, the master of the country deserves crown and throne. The world cannot get peace without a ruler. A garden without gardener will be a playground of thorns.'[117] But Qandhari was not as eloquent as Abul Fazl in devising a range of mechanisms which pronounced royalty of no ordinary origin and consequence.

Thus the theory that validated kingship automatically endowed the king with kingly duties and functions. He was the protector of his subjects and he was to punish the culprits, making him the dispenser of justice.[118] This paved the way for another theory of sovereignty called social contract.[119] The Emperor would defend the four essences of his subjects, viz., life (*jan*), property (*mal*), honour (*namus*), and faith (*din*); in return the subjects were to be obedient and they had to give a share of their resources. The theory of social contract is significant from the perspective that it not only enabled the king to exercise his regal duties of providing protection and justice[120] to his subjects but at the same time it permitted him to check the power of the powerful as he was to give

[116] Norbert Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2006, p. 1.

[117] Muhammad Arif Qandhari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, tr. Tasneem Ahmad, Pragati Publications, Delhi, 1993, p. 41.

[118] Even in the Delhi Sultanate period, sultans were very meticulous of dispensing justice which was one of the means of exerting authority. Ibn Battuta writes about Mohammad bin Tughlaq:
'The Sultan would punish all wrongs whether big or small and he would spare neither man of learning and of probity nor those of high descent. Every hundreds of people in chains were brought into the Council Hall. Those who were to be killed were killed, and those who were to be tortured were tortured and those who were to be beaten were beaten.'
A Fourteenth Century Arab Account of India under Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (Being English Translation of the Chapters on India from Shihab al-Din al-Umari's Masalik al absar fi-mamalik al-amsar), trs. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi and Qazi Mohammad Ahmad, Siddiqi Publishing House, Aligarh, 1971, pp. 17-18.

[119] Such a concept i.e. kingship as a covenant or contract between the king and his subjects was prevalent even during the ancient Indian period. *The Arthasastra* of Kautilya which deals with statecraft, mentions that 'the king performs the function of gods Indra and Yama: that is, he protects by leading (Indra) and by regulating or administering justice (Yama). For this function the people "fixed 1/6 part of the crops, and 1/10 of their goods, and money, as his reward.' Nicholas Kazanas, op.cit., p. 47.

[120] The rituals of personal justice were a means to limit the power of the powerful, thus protecting the weak. Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law, Crime and Justice in Early Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998, pp. 4-5.

protection to the weak against the powerful. This, in turn, facilitated him to legitimize his use of power as well as violence (to punish the culprits). Once the power was legitimized, he emerged as the rightful master whose sovereignty was legitimate and the obedience and loyalty of his subjects towards him was their duty, for 'The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty.'[121]

Besides, the document *Mahzar* enabled to support the imperial claim that the Mughal Emperor was a just ruler. It says that the Quran commands: ' "Obey God, and obey the prophet, and those who have authority among you," and, secondly of the genuine Tradition: "Surely the man who is dearest to God on the day of judgment is the *Imam-i-adil*; whosoever obeys the Amir, obeys Thee ; and whosoever rebels against him, rebels against Thee." ' The leading ulama declared that Akbar 'the king of Islam, Amir of the Faithful, shadow of God in the world' was 'a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king' and that in the eyes of God the status of *Sultan-i-adil* (a just ruler) was higher than that of a *mujtahid*. Therefore, his decision regarding matters on which the *mujtahids* had conflicting opinions would be final.[122]

True and Selfish King: Moral Rationalization of Imperial Actions

A ruler belonging to whatever time, land, whatever religious affiliation he had, he had always been keen on exploring and expanding the base to validate his rule and his actions. Validating his actions was very essential for the ruler in order to validate and sustain his power.[123] Pronouncing royalty a legitimate institution was as important as

[121] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, tr. G. D. H. Cole, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London, rep. 1973, p. 168.

[122] Abdu-l-Qadir Ibn-i-Muluk Shah known as Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh*, vol. II (The Reign of Akbar, from 983 to 1004 A.H.), tr. W.H.Lowe, Academica Asiatica, Patna, 1973, p. 279.

[123] In conversations with Qazi Mughis who called the acts of Alauddin Khilji as contrary to divine law and that 'it is nowhere stated that a sovereign may do whatever he chooses with regard to the promulgation of orders', the Sultan, in his defense and to justify his imperial orders, replied, "…in order that insurrections may not occur, in which so many thousands of Musalmans are constantly destroyed, I adopt such measures towards the people, as seem most to their advantage. The people, however, shew a rebellious and contumacious spirit, and will not fulfil my commands; and I am, therefore, compelled to make such severe laws as will reduce them to obedience. I know not whether these laws are sanctioned by faith or not ; but whatever I conceive to be for the good of the state, and whatever appears expedient to me at the time, that I order, and as for what may happen to me on the approaching day of judgment, that I know not". *The Reign*

declaring the rule of many rulers unlawful, thus, making the legitimate rule accessible to just a few. The union of morality and governance was one of the ways to achieve it. Abul Fazl while speaking of social contract, warns his readers that not any ruler could be able to honour the social contract; only a just ruler who had power and divine supervision could do it. According to him, 'silly' and 'shortsighted men' were deficient in recognizing a '*true*' ruler and a '*selfish'* ruler. Only 'men of deeper insight' could tell a difference. Therefore, there could be many rulers but not many of them e true rulers. In the realm of a true ruler, 'Security, health, chastity, justice, polite manners, faithfulness, truth, an increase of sincerity, etc.' were evident while in the dominion of the latter, who possessed nothing but 'the external forms of royal power, by vanity, the slavishness of men, and the desire of enjoyment; hence, everywhere there is insecurity, unsettledness, strife, oppression, faithlessness, robbery.'[124] In this manner Fazl established a demarcation between a true and a selfish or a false king.

Fazl further enumerated four excellent qualities of a true king: *A paternal love towards the subjects, a large heart, a daily increasing trust in God,* and *Prayer and devotion.*[125] These traits were highlighted in order to emphasize that a true king was indeed morally upright. Fazl proclaimed Akbar as the true ruler, 'Praise be to God, the Giver of every good gift! The exalted monarch of our time is so endowed with these laudable dispositions, that it is no exaggeration to call him their *exordium*. From the light of his wisdom, he discerns the worth of men, and kindles the lamp of their energy; whilst ever clear to himself, and without an effort, he adorns his wisdom with the beauty of practice.'[126] He also declared Akbar as the spiritual guide of the people as he possessed Divine wisdom and that his subjects had a firm belief in his spiritual assistance.[127]

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of Alauddin Khilji, translated from Ziauddin Barani's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, Pilgrim Publishers, trs. A. R. Fuller and A. Khallaque, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 89-90.

[124] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 2-3.

[125] Ibid., vol. I, p. 3.

[126] Ibid., vol. I, p. 9.

[127] Abul Fazl reported, 'But when His Majesty leaves Court, in order to settle the affairs of a province, to conquer a kingdom, or to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, there is not a hamlet, a town, or a city that does not send forth crowds of men and women with vow-offerings in their hands, and prayers on their lips, touching the ground with their foreheads, praising the efficacy of their vows, or proclaiming the accounts of the spiritual assistance received. Other multitudes ask for lasting bliss, for an upright heart, for advice how best to act, for strength of the body, for enlightenment, for the birth of a son, the reunion of friends, a long life, increase of wealth, elevation in rank, and many other things.' ibid., vol. I, pp. 172-3.

Qandhari stressed that it was an outcome of the rule of a ruler like Akbar that tyranny and injustice were non-existent. He stated:

> He is such a paragon of justice that he has purified the whole country from the dirt and sin of drinking and adultery. In spite of that the state gets a very substantial revenue from public shops (drinking-houses, serving light drinks, brothels and gambling-dens, he sacrificed this income once and for all which amounted to lakhs and crores of tankas.[128]

While Akbar's court chroniclers emphasized on the good governance owing to the direct divine light and guidance their Master received incessantly and to his wisdom and the sense of justice, some years after when an English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe had visited the court of Jahangir in 1615, his chaplain who had accompanied the ambassador, in his account too highlighted the Mughal administration but in a different light. The chaplain, in order to validate his point of view, first put forward the notion of good governance as by viewed by one of their renowned philosophers, Aristotle. He wrote: 'And it is that indeed, which is the worft of all governments, called by Ariftotle arbitrary, illimited, tyrannical, fuch as a moft fevere mafter ufeth to fervants, not that which a good king adminiftreth to Subjects.'[129] Terry further wrote that the Mughals had no established laws and that the Emperors arbitrarily exercised power, giving out justice and deriving pleasure from granting gruesome punishments. Terry's motive in giving out an outline of the worst form of government as defined by Aristotle, followed by his own observation of the way the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir governed his vast territory as a despot, is to bring a parallel between the worst government and the Mughal government. His representation of the Mughals through his writing is based on the general tendency of the Europeans to essentialize the East**.**[130]

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[128] *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p. 55.

[129] Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India: wherein some things are taken notice of, in our Passage Thither, but Many More in our AbodeThere, within the Rich and Most SPACIOUS Empire of the Mogul,* reprinted from the edition of 1655, London, p. 352.

[130] Based on such elements like the absence of the rule of law, award of barbaric punishments, etc. the British later had justified their colonial rule in India and in other parts of the world. Arthur James Balfour, a British Conservative politician and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1902 to 1905 to rationalize the British colonization of Egypt in his speech on 13 June 1910 to the House of Commons had applied the Orient way of structuring the relationship between the East and the West and regarded the

The evaluation of the Europeans at the Mughal court, using the similar line of argument of good and bad administration as used by the Mughal court chroniclers, satiated their pre-conceived notion of the East. However, the distinction between a true king and a selfish one was a crucial device for the court chroniclers in order to acquire validation for various imperial actions of their ruler. Conquest of new territories was one of them. Akbar was of the opinion that 'A monarch should ever be intent on conquest, otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him.'[131] However acts of aggression could not be exercised without justifying them. Often when the lands of non-Muslims were attacked or conquered, the Mughal Emperors would project themselves as the defender of Islam. Babur adopted the title of ghazi after the success in the Battle of Khanua against the Rajput ruler of Mewar in 1527, claiming, "For the sake of Islam I became a wanderer; I battled infidels and Hindus. / I determined to become a martyr. Thank God I became a holy warrior."[132] Even though his success in the battle was an outcome of his military skills and strategies of which he had given a vivid description in his memoirs, yet he maintained that he owed his victory to Allah's will: "Praise be to God the all-hearing, all-knowing. Victory cometh from God alone, the powerful judge." He addressed Rana Sanga with who earlier he was in alliance against Ibrahim Lodi as an 'infidel', an enemy of Islam, etc. and compared Rana's army with those of the Elephanteers, the Ashab al-Fil, the Ethiopian invaders of Mecca in 570 A.D. who were miraculously defeated: 'When the sound of the Islamic hosts reached the ears of the enemies of true religion, those accursed infidel opponents of the Muhammadan nation, like the Elephanteers intent upon the destructions of the Kaaba they relied upon their elephants with bodies like mountains and countenances like demons and, all of one accord and of one intent, divided their wretched army into divisions.' 'With stones and matchlocks the Hindus all were reduced as low as the Elephanteers.'[133]

Oriental as 'irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different" ' and the European as 'rational, virtuous, mature, "normal". Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1979, p. 40.

[131] Ibid., vol. III, p. 451.

[132] *The Baburnama, Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, ed. and tr. Wheeler M. Thackston, The Modern Library, New York, 1996, rep. 2002, p. 394.

[133] Ibid., pp. 388, 393.

Even before the Battle of Khanua began, Babur in order to infuse a sense of courage and zeal among his tired and skeptical soldiers and officers,[134] broke gold and silver drinking vessels and goblets, renouncing liquor (in spite of the fact that he was fond of drinking wine), grew his beard and made his men to take a pledge on the *Quran* 'that they will not dream of turning their faces from this battle or leaving this contest and struggle while there is life left in their bodies' because 'those who die are martyrs and those who kill are holy warriors'. Pleased by the desired effect of his speech and his performative acts on his men, he concluded in his memoirs by writing, 'I formulated a plan'. 'It was a really good plan, and it had favourable propagandistic effect on friend and foe.'[135] Such victories were taken as gifts showered by Allah and an evidence of His mercy. "The successive gifts of the Almighty are the cause of frequent praises and thanksgivings, and the number of these praises and thanksgivings is, in its turn, the cause of the constant succession of God's mercies."[136] Once they were defeated, attempts were made to incorporate them. Jahangir in his memoirs voices his opinion regarding the kind of treatment his subjects (mainly comprised of Hindus) was to be given:

> For when I consider that the Almighty has constituted me the shadow of his beneficence on earth, and that his gracious providence is equally extended to all existence, it would but ill accord with the character thus bestowed, to contemplate for an instant the butchery of nearly the whole population; for of the whole population of Hindustaun, it is notorious that five parts in six are composed of Hindus, the adorers of images, and the whole concerns of trade and manufactures, weaving and other industries and lucrative pursuits, are entirely under the management of these classes. Were it, therefore, ever so much my desire to convert them to the true faith, it would be impossible, otherwise than

[134] Babur before the Battle of Khanua had already fought many significant battles because of which his army by then was already worn-out. Also, it was predicted by an astrologer named Muhammad Sharif that Babur would be defeated in the battle which tremendously disheartened the soldiers who had consulted the astrologer. Ibid., p. 379.
[135] Ibid., pp. 383-4.
[136] Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padshah *Ghazi*, *Babur –Nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, vol. I, tr. Annette Susannah Beveridge, Oriental Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, rep. 1970, p. 560.

> through the excision of millions of men…the massacre of a whole people can never be any business of mine.[137]

Here Jahangir had not chosen to be regarded as the champion of Islam but had artfully employed one of the Mughal imperial ideologies (divine-sanctioned kingship) to give credence to another, i.e. the Emperor as a just ruler, providing protection to all his subjects, thereby, fulfilling his kingly duties.

Branding a territory as the land of a *kafir* and declaring *jihad* against it could not be applied when engaged in besieging the territory of a Muslim ruler to realize the aim of conquest and expansion. Therefore the strategy of the demarcation between a true king and a selfish king was really handy for the conquest of an Islamic state. Charges of bad governance, wicked designs of the state, etc., were brought against them. However it is to be noted that similar charges could also be brought against the non-Muslim rulers. Abul Fazl while enumerating various duties of a wise king, justifies the act of a king to conquer new lands if it was not ruled by a just ruler.[138] Now conquering the land of an unwise ruler by an enlightened and just ruler meant punishing the incapable ruler and civilizing the people of the conquered territory.[139] So by the means of conquest, a wise ruler is exercising one of his kingly duties, i.e. giving out justice to the people of the conquered land by punishing the unjust ruler. Abul Fazl writes: 'The sole idea of wise kings is day by day to refresh the garden of the world by the streams of justice, and assuredly this design is accomplished whenever extensive countries come into the hands

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[137] *Autobiographical Memoirs of the Emperor Jahangueir*, tr. Major David Price, Editions Indian, Calcutta, 1972, p. 32.

[138] Even the legitimacy of the British colonial rule in India was built upon one of the assumptions that the aim of their rule was 'to improve the country and to bring the fruits of progress and modernity to the subject peoples…it is inherent in the logic of colonialism that people who were different because they were regarded as inferior had to be made similar and, hence, equal by being civilized.' The officials of the East India Company 'regarded the country and its people as subjugated by political regimes that they characterized as 'Oriental despotism' and thus, started their 'civilizing mission', Michael Mann, 'Torchbearers Upon the Path of Progress: Britian's Ideology of a 'Moral and Material Progress' in India, An Introductory Essay', eds. Harald Fisher-Tine and Michael Mann, *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India*, Wimbledon Publishing Company, London, 2004, p. 5.

[139] Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de la Brede et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), who was an aristocratic owner of Bordeaux vineyards and, along with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the two philosophers who defined the contours of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment, voices a similar kind of thought in his work,

of one who is just and of wide capacity.' [140] The reason given for the conquest of Patna by Akbar was that the ruler, Daud Khan was a great drunkard and was so engrossed in drinking that he hardly gave any time to the administration.[141]

Likewise it is in this context that the Uzbeks in the Mughal chronicler's accounts were mentioned with contempt. To begin with, it was an Uzbek named Shaibani Khan Uzbek who had overthrown Babur from Transoxiana, his father's territory and compelled him to flee to Kabul and later, to Hindustan. Officially the Mughals called the Uzbeks '*Kuffar-i Kalama gu wa Musalmanan-I kafir khu*' i.e., Kafirs, who recited the Oath of Affirmation and Musalmans who lived according to the ways of Kafirs.[142] Khafi Khan before he began to account the Mughal-Uzbek war in 1647, wrote, 'It is necessary to say something about the origin and the ways of these wicked people'.[143] He elaborated:

> It is said that the Alamans are a sect of the Uzbek Cossacks (*qazzaq*, robbers), and that their food, dress, action and ways of life are not like those of human beings; they are monsters (*nasnans*) in appearance and have no regard for righteousness. The perpetual effort of these wicked carnivora is for the collection of money and treasures, their permanent profession is shedding blood, creating disorder, following unjust ways and seizing accumulated wealth of anyone they can find, like cruel and reckless highway robbers. This is their lawful way of livelihood. In order to seize a half-dead pony, many of their blood-drinking warriors will try to excel in killing each other, and this they consider to be the basis of their responsibility and honour. In pitched battles they consider it an attribute of courage to give way to the enemy at the first attack and to shoot back arrows while running away. In their marches, for the sake of plunder, they can traverse long distances in a day or two, and they do not need tents or other conveniences. Even a number of their leaders can (sleep) comfortably under an old *Chadar* (blankets). Their best food is the blood of horses, sour *kumis*[144] and

[140] *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, vol. III, tr. H. Beveridge, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1902-39, rep. 2007, p.715.
[141] *Contemporary Dutch Chronicle of Mughal India*, trs. Brij Narain and Sri Ram Sharma, Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., Calcutta, 1957, p. 18.
[142] Anees Jahan Syed, *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, Somaya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, New Delhi, 1977, p. 29.
[143] Ibid., p. 28.
[144] Liquor made from the milk of mares.

> barley; if they can obtain a piece of stinking meat or find a half-dead quadruped, they consider it a luxury.[145]

It seems such disdainful attitude of the Mughals towards the Uzbeks had also affected the opinions of the Europeans at the Mughal court. Niccolao Manucci, the Italian traveler, considered them as 'savages'[146] while the French physician and traveller, Francois Bernier regarded them 'of very little ceremony'.[147]

Based on the distinction between a true ruler and a selfish ruler, further types of distinctions were encouraged. This was the notion which was underlined by some eminent writers since antiquity. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, in his work 'Politics' written in 350 B.C, observed that on the basis of the distinction between good and evil, further distinctions could be created such as distinctions between freedom and slavery, and noble and humble birth...'rendering it expedient and right for the one to be slaves and the others to be masters: the one practicing obedience, the others exercising the authority and lordship...'[148] Abul Fazl too in his writing had employed a similar kind of distinction between good and evil (kings) and through this categorization, he had tried to place Akbar, as the true ruler, above the rest of the populace, perfectly eligible to rule over them as their lord. Fazl stressed that a true king was a recipient of Divine Light and that not everyone was capable of receiving it but only a true king who had an uninterrupted access to it and for this, he needed no intermediaries. The concept of direct association of the Emperor with divinity aided in creating an effective public image of the king. Hierarchy[149] among men was further sharpened. A true king was placed at the top of the

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[145] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, pp. 28-9.

[146] Manucci, *A Pepys of Mogul India, 1653-1708, Being an Abridged Edition of the "Storia Do Mogor" of Niccolao Manucci*, tr. William Irvine, Low Price Publications, Delhi, rep. 1913, p. 99.

[147] Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-68*, tr. Irving Brock, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1934, p. 121.

[148] Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. Jowett, Benjamin, Digireads.com Publishing, Stilwell, KS, 2005, p. 8.

[149] Louis Dumont in his famous work, *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970), too speaks about the categorical opposition (between the pure and impure with respect to Indian caste system and kinship ranking and says, 'To adopt a value is to introduce hierarchy, and a certain consensus of values, a certain hierarchy of ideas, things and people, is indispensable to social life'. R. S. Khare, A Theory of 'Pure Hierarchy', ed. R. S. Khare, *Caste; Hierarchy, and Individualism, Indian Critiques of Louis Dumont's Contributions*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 60.
While emphasizing on hierarchy being 'a universal necessity', he argues that it gives the status of a first principle. T.N Madan, Louis Dumont and the Study of Society, ed. R. S. Khare, *Caste; Hierarchy, and Individualism, Indian Critiques of Louis Dumont's Contributions*, p. 46.

social hierarchy; the collaborators who could recognize the true king were placed above the dissenters. However, there was stratification among the collaborators as well and not everyone enjoyed closer proximity to the Emperor. Abul Fazl had noted:

> And hence it is that the sages of ancient times have said that princes who wear the jewel of wisdom do not appoint every low man to their service ; that they do not consider every one who has been appointed, to be deserving of daily admittance ; that those who are thus favoured, are not therefore deemed worthy to sit with them on the carpet of intercourse ; that those who are worthy of this station, are not necessarily admitted to the pavilion of familiar address ; that those who have this privilege, are not therefore allowed to sit in the august assembly ; that those upon whom this ray of good fortune falls, are not therefore let into their secrets ; and that those who enjoy the happiness of this station, are not therefore fit for admission into the Cabinet Council.[150]

It is interesting to note that the ploy of true and false rulers which was wielded by Abul Fazl in order to legitimize the Mughal Emperor, Akbar's rule and his political actions and territorial aggrandizement, was very much exercised by those who contested the Mughal power and its legitimacy. After the execution of Guru Arjun Dev by Jahangir, his son, Guru Hargobind proclaimed himself as the *Sacha Padshah*, the true ruler and the throne he took for himself was regarded as Akal (the Eternal Being). Earlier the title *Sacha Padshah*, also taken by Guru Arjun Dev, was just honorific but under Guru Hargobind's guruship, the title seriously became associated with the Sikh guru. The remarks of Khushwant Singh sums up the likeness in the manner of living between the Mughal Emperor and the sixth Sikh Guru[151]: 'The Guru's abode did in fact become like that of the Emperor. He sat on the throne and held court. He went out with a royal

[150] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 8-9.

[151] Religious heads assuming regal power was not an unknown phenomenon. Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809), the fifth Abbasid Caliphate, his manners were like an absolute ruler, not like the religious successor to the Prophet. He would not mingle with his subjects. He led a life full of pomp and spectacle. Courtiers performed salutation to him which was only reserved for God. He took pompous titles declaring himself the 'Shadow of God on earth' while on the other hand, the Prophet himself had never been called by any such titles but by his given name. He would have executioner placed behind him, signalling that he had the power of life and death and that his power was absolute and unlimited. Karen Armstrong, *Islam, A Short History*, A Phoenix Paperback, London, 2001, pp. 46-7.

umbrella over his head and was always accompanied by armed retainers. He sent envoys to ruling princes and received their agents in durbar, where presents were exchanged.'[152] Gradually, the belief that the Sikh Guru was the only true ruler became so deeply ingrained in the Sikh tradition that the Sikh rulers of the temporal world refused to claim royalty for themselves. In 1801 when Sardar Ranjit Singh, the founder of the Sikh Empire, sat on the throne, he declined to proclaim himself as the ruler because he regarded the Guru as the *Sacha Padshah* and himself as his humble servant. The coins of the Empire had the inscription professing his faith: '…Victory and Unhesitating Patronage have been obtained from Nanak-Guru Govind Singh.'[153]

Similarly, when Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru marched to Dacca or Jahangir Nagar (now in Bangladesh), leaving his family at Patna in 1666, he had asked the Patna Sangat (congregation) to send him turbans[154] which he granted as robes of honour to prominent Sikhs who had come to visit him on his way to Dacca.[155] A *hukamnama* of Guru Gobind Singh mentions that turbans in those days were costlier than gold. One and a half quarter tola of gold would cost nineteen and a quarter rupees.[156] On another occasion the Guru ordered for 'five baskets of vessels of Minapore…*Albele*, *Surahi* (long necked pitcher), bowls (*pyale*) of superior quality' to be sent to the *Dharmashala* of Bhai Kalyana at Delhi as gifts to Nawab Saif Khan.[157] The Guru appeared to be very particular about the gift ceremony and the objects and its quality which constituted the gift to a recipient. In his *hukamnama* to the Patna Sangat he had specifically listed the names of the articles to be sent to Nawab Saif Khan and twice reminded the Sangat in the same *hukamnama* to send the objects of superior quality.[158] On the eve of the birth of his son,

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[152] Raj Pal Singh, *The Sikhs: Their Journey of Five Hundred Years*, Bhavana Books and Prints, New Delhi, 2003, p. 22.
[153] Ganda Singh, *A Short Life-Sketch in Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 1st Death Centenary Memorial, Nirmal Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1986 rep., p. 20.
[154] This *hukamnama* is kept in the Gurdwara Hari Mandir Sahib at Patna. Sabinderjit Singh Sagar, *Hukamnamas of Guru Tegh Bahadur: A Historical Study*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2002, p. 126.
[155] Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur, Prophet and Martyr, (A Biography)*, Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Delhi, 1965, p. 220.
[156] *Hukumnamas of Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 39.
[157] Ibid. p.131.
[158] Loc. cit.

Guru Gobind Singh, had sent a robe of honour[159] and instructed the Sangat of Patna to lodge his family 'in a fine, large mansion'[160]. Robe of honour was given to Bhai Dyal Das for his service; the ceremonial dress was given to other important Sikhs on several different occasions.[161] He would also ask the men to come for his *darshan* which is evident from his letter to Banaras Sangat, apprising them to report at his camp at Monghyr (now in Bihar) for *darshan* and finally when he arrived at Dacca in 1668, he received 'a reception befitting kings and emperors'[162].

And just as Abul Faz had postulated four chief qualities of a true king, and that Akbar, who was endowed with such qualities, was a true ruler, Guru Gobind Singh too, in his struggle against the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb in his letter to the Emperor had advanced his definition of a true king and his qualities. According to the Guru, a ruler should have the following attributes:

For the lustre of grandeur, he has, the light of conscience,
He has wisdom in ruling and wields the Sword only for Justice…
He is clean of conscience and bright of countenance,
On him God bestows domains and wealth.

Based on his notion of a true ruler, the Guru declared Aurangzeb's rule as unjust and unlawful and therefore, refused to accept the Emperor's authority:

But, Emperor Aurangzeb you are cursed,
And far from kingly ways, and far from true religion.[163]

The Guru, by comparing the conduct of his with that of Aurangzeb's in his letter, called the Emperor as an unworthy ruler; he simultaneously proclaimed himself as 'the Protector', the just one and truthful, which were, to him, the qualities of a true ruler:

To you God has given sway over four corners of this land
But to me He has assigned the duty of the Protector of faith
You have might for depredation, through deceit and fraud

[159] Ibid. p. 128.
[160] Ibid. p. 130.
[161] Ibid., p. 37.
[162] *Guru Tegh Bahadur, Prophet and Martyr*, p. 221.
[163] *Zafar Namah of Guru Gobind Singh Maharaj addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb, Letters from the Last Sikh Guru to the Last Moghul Emperor*, trs. Baba Sahib, Baba P. L. Bedi, Unity Book Club of India, New Delhi, p. 27.

And I am given the strength to right the wrong, through Truth and Justice.
Your name Aurangzeb "Adornment of the throne" ill becomes you
For, those truly worthy of the throne are never deceitful.
You disgraced even the ashes in your father
The blood of your brothers has stained your head.[164]

As we discussed earlier that Abul Fazl had looked upon men who lacked the ability to recognize a true ruler as 'silly' and 'shortsighted men', in a similar light, Guru Gobind Singh, who defeated the hill chiefs trying to overpower the Sikhs at the command of Aurangzeb, had described them as 'idol-worshippers' who worshipped the false God, seated on the Mughal throne and that he would break that idol. Like Islam, Sikhism too believes in monotheism and iconoclasm.[165] By declaring himself as an iconoclast, and Aurangzeb as an idol which he would destroy, the Guru tried to justify and give legitimation to his resistance to the Mughal supremacy.

I have annihilated the conspirators, the hill chieftains
For they are idol-worshippers and I am an Idol-breaker.[166]

Royalty and Divinity

Abul Fazl also brought a correlation between royalty and divinity[167] through the conception of *farr-i-izdi* i.e., the king is the Divine Light. He explained, 'Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe, the argument of the book of perfection, the receptacle of all virtues. Modern language calls this light *farr-izidi* (the divine light), and the tongue of antiquity called it *kiyan khura* (the

[164] Ibid., p. 13.
[165] Raghu Naath Singh and Dharam Pal Singh, Secularism and Preventing Terrorism in India, ed. N. Prabha Unnithan, *Crime and Justice in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2013, p. 112.
[166] Ibid., p. 27.
[167] Since ancient times, the Indian concept of kingship had been associated with divinity to authenticate king's power and authority. Gen'ichi Yamazaki on the basis of literary sources, viz., the Dharmasastras, the Buddhist literature and the Arthasastra, proposed some vital points of the basic Indian concept of kingship and one of them included the notion that 'kingship was created by God and was granted to human beings, i.e., God created the original king (Dharmasastras)'. Gen'ichi Yamazaki, Kingship in Ancient India as Described in Literary Sources and Inscriptions, Noboru Karashima ed., *Kingship in Indian History*, Manohar Publication, Delhi, 1999, p. 19.

sublime halo).'[168] Thus, he attempted to portray his monarch, Akbar in a new light, distinguishing him from the rest of the early Muslim monarchs who had ruled in Hindustan. Before Akbar, the Sultans of Delhi too had employed the notion of association between royalty and divinity. Ghiassudin Balban (1266-86), who is considered as the greatest 'slave' sultan of Delhi, was the first Muslim Indian ruler to call himself *Zil-i-illahi*, 'the shadow of God', proclaiming himself as the vice-regent of God on earth and signaling to others that he ruled by divine sanction and so, as a ruler he was not accountable to earthlings.[169] But there was a difference in the concept of kingship between the Sultans of Delhi and those of the Mughals. Abul Fazl, not satisfied with the concept of *zil-i-illahi*, devised a different model and declared the king as the Divine Light and not a mere shadow. He wrote in his work, 'Although kings are the shadow of God on earth, he is the emanation of God's light. How then can we call him a shadow?'[170] Abul Fazl's association of kingship with divinity by design disassociated the institution with having any claim of it being man-made. And by saying that royalty is the highest dignity conferred on a king by god[171], he at once forwarded the justification for its need or the raison d'être monarchy originated. Ralph Fitch, the first English to visit the court of the Mughals in 1584, observed that Akbar 'permitted himself to be worshipped as a type of royalty emanating from God.'[172]

Fazl skillfully weaved multiple lofty concepts together. A nexus of myths, beliefs, and symbolisms from various sources was invented or borrowed. The conception of *farr-i-izdi* was devised not just to legitimize Akbar's rule but also those of his ancestors as well as of his descendants. Firstly, it was to make believe that the birth of a monarch was no ordinary event but was an outcome of a divine design. Fazl proposed another concept called *Immaculate Conception* in order to establish the belief that Akbar and his ancestors had no ordinary lineage. Before Abul Fazl, the model is known to have been put into use for Timur after his demise. The inscription on his sarcophagus, which is located at

[168] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 3.
[169] J. L. Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India, Medieval Indian Society and Culture*, vol. III, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1983, p. 44.
[170] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 631.
[171] Ibid., vol. I, p. 2.
[172] Ralph Fitch, *England's Pioneer to India and Burma, His Companions and Contemporaries*, J. Horton Ryley, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 1998, p. 90.

Samarqand, describes Alanqua, a mythical Mongol queen, miraculously impregnated by divine light which was communicated directly from God, to be Timur's mother.[173] Abul Fazl had linked the Akbar's lineage from Adam down to Alanqua. He wrote, '...a glorious light cast a ray into the tent and entered the mouth and throat of that fount of spiritual knowledge and glory. The cupola of chastity became pregnant by that light in the same way as did her Majesty (Hazrat) Miryam (Mary) the daughter of Imran (Amram).'[174] And that this was 'the beginning of the manifestation of his Majesty, the king of kings'[175] (Akbar) and since the occurrence of this phenomenal event, the divine light had been passed through ancestors of the Mughals and finally this 'divine strategy'[176] was revealed to the world when Akbar was born for the benefit of mankind. 'The Lord of Time is Akbar, or rather the Divine Light conceived by Alanquwa, which had to go through a successive course of births, before it appeared in its final perfection in the person of His Majesty, King Akbar.' And this 'divine strategy' was devised 'for the benefit of men, for the purpose of improving their condition (*parda-arai*).'[177]

The inspiration for such a concept could have been an outcome of Akbar's interaction with the Jesuit Missionaries. Monserrate wrote of the meeting, 'He (Akbar) examined everything, and began to talk about the birth of Christ'.[178] Abul Fazl's verse viz., 'If you listen to the tale of Mary, Believe the same of Alanquwa'[179], mentioned in the *Akbarnama* too indicates that the idea of Immaculate Conception could have been borrowed from Christianity. But, as Ruby Lal puts it, it is also very likely that Abul Fazl could have drawn the idea from the Mahabharata which speaks of Kunti's miraculous conception through the rays of the Sun god, Surya. And since Akbar had close marital and political relations with the Rajput rajas and chieftains who traced their lineage either from the Sun or the Moon, it couldn't have been more apt for the author to borrow some indigenous concepts of genealogy and legitimation.

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[173] Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory*, The Asia Society Galleries, New York, p. 17. It is the catalogue of an exhibition which was held by the Asia Society in Celebration of the Festival of India 1985-86, p. 17.
[174] *Akbar Nama*, vol. I, p. 179.
[175] Ibid., vol. I, p. 180.
[176] Ibid., vol. I, p. 187.
[177] Ibid., vol. I, Note by T.Bloch, on p. 180, line 4, from bottom of text.
[178] Monserrate, p. 59.
[179] *Akbar Nama*, vol. I, p. 182.

Such a theme of association between divinity and kingship was recurrent in multiple ways in the Mughal world. If we examine iconographic visual representation of symbols, we find that the Mughal Emperors had incorporated varied symbols from miscellaneous sources, depicting their divine elements. Especially during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, such type of representation had become very intricate and expressive. Jahangir, in sync with his predecessors, liked to be associated with the concept of divine light and therefore, he frequently used the term '*Nur'* (meaning light in Arabic). From his chief queen, Nur Jahan[180] to the animals[181] he kept, the gardens[182] and cities[183] he constructed, all were adorned with the epithet 'Nur'(perhaps through this, the divine light he received, could be transmitted to his favourites). Thus the act of naming them so was a means to assert his association with divinity. And most importantly, he began his rule by styling himself as Nuruddin: 'An inspiration from the hidden world brought it into my mind that, in as much as the business of kings is the controlling of the world, I should give myself the name of Jahangir (World-seizer) and make my title of honour (*laqab*) Nuru-d-din, in as much as my sitting on the throne coincided with the rising and shining on the earth of the great light (the Sun).'[184]

Light as symbolic representation of divine attributes of the emperor, from the time of Jahangir's reign had become considerably a significant motif in Mughal art.[185] In many

[180] 'On the same day I ordered Nur-mahall Begam to be called Nur-Jahan Begam.' Nur al-Din Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, tr. Alexander Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge, London, 1909-14, rep. 1989, p. 319.
[181] He named one of his favourite elephants Nur Gaj. Ibid., vol. I, p. 47.
Another elephant which was presented to him by his son, Shah Jahan as *peshkash* after the victory over Rana of Mewar, was given the name of Nur-bakht (the Light of Fortune). Ibid., vol. I, pp. 395-396.
Nur-i-Nauruz (the Light of New Year's Day) was the name given to one of the elephants he had received on the occasion of Nauruz as *peshkash* from the ruler of Golconda, Qutbu-l-mulk while the other was named Dad-i-Ilahi (the Gift of God). Ibid., vol. II, p. 79.
'to the gold moher of two thousand tolah, I gave the name of nour-e-shahy—light of the kingdom; to that of one thousand tolahs, nourjahaun—light of the world; to that of five hundred tolahs, nour-e-dolout—light of the state; to that of one hundred, nour-e-moher—light of the sun; and to that of one tolah, which was substituted for the gold rupee, I gave the designation of Nour-ud-deen Moahommad, Jahangueir Padshah—the light of the faith of Mahommed, Jahangueir Emperor. *Autobiographical Memoirs of the Emperor Jahangueir*, tr. Major David Price, Editions Indian, Calcutta, 1972, p. 12.
[182] Nur-afza garden (Light Increasing), *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. II, p. 151. Nur-afshan. Ibid.,vol. II, p. 197.
[183] Nurpur. Ibid., vol. II, p. 154. Nur Saray, Ibid., vol. II, p. 192.
[184] Ibid., vol. I, p. 2-3.
[185] Mughal art was reflective of Mughal state ideologies and was modeled on the standard set by the Emperor arbitrarily. Ashok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time*, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1978, p. 107.

Mughal miniature paintings, the Emperor is shown with halo. Prominent historians dealing with Mughal iconographic images and paintings have suggested that halo in Mughal paintings was the result of European and Christian influences. Ebba Koch in one of her celebrated essays[186] examines the impact of the Jesuit Missionaries in creating Mughal state ideologies. The first Jesuit mission had arrived at the Mughal court during the reign of Akbar in 1580 under Fr. Rudolf Acquaviva (who was put in charge of the mission), Fr. Antony Monserrate and the Persian born Br. Francis Henriques (as Fr. Rudolf Acquaviva's companions) with the intention to evangelize the emperor.[187] They presented him the seven volumes of the *Antwerp Polyglot Bible*[188]. Though the Jesuits could not attain the purpose of their visit but the Bible with its illustrations had opened up a series of dialogue between Mughal art and European forms of symbolic representation. The Jesuits taught the Emperor the allegorical meaning of the illustrations[189] and the Mughal painters were commanded to appropriate the ideas to fit into the Mughal concepts of kingship. The paintings commissioned during Akbar's period, however, had no symbolic significance connected to the portrait of an individual, with an exception of halo and simurgh, the birds of paradise.[190] An image of Simurgh was representative of royal power in ancient Near and Far East.[191]

It was Jahangir and Shah Jahan who had infused the Mughal court painting with a world of symbolisms and metaphors. The European symbolic themes like areole, puttis, cherubs and even God the Father were frequently used. Shah Jahan was the first Mughal emperor under who for the first time an attempt was made to represent God in human form by his painter, Bichitr, in his work, titled, 'Double portrait of Shah Jahan and Asaf Khan',

[186] Ebba Koch, The Influence of the Jesuit Missions on Symbolic Representations of the Mughal Emperors in Koch, Ebba, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001.
[187] Antonio Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1922, pp. 4-5.
[188] The famous Royal Polyglot Bible was sponsored by King Philip II of Spain (1556-98), and edited by Dr. Benito Arias Montanus, the King's personal chaplain, in collaboration with renowned scholars and printed by Christophe Plantin in Antwerp (1568-72). The Bible was considered to be instrumental in converting many Jews and Muslims, Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, p. 2.
[189] 'Then the Priest, at the King's command, unrolled the books, and seizing the opportunity, explained the pictures.' Monserrate, *Commentary*, p. 138.
[190] Som Prakash Verma, Symbols and Motifs in the Mughal School of Art, eds. Jan Qaisar, S. P. Verma, *Art and Culture, Painting and Perspective*, vol. II, Abhinav Publications, Delhi, 2002, p. 45.
[191] National Museum Bulletin, Nos. 4, 5 and 6.

c.1645-50. In the painting, the image of God the Father is shown amidst the clouds with the broad band of light radiating from Him and the divine light gets merged with the halo of the emperor, Shah Jahan.[192]

It is to be noted that the concept of halo was not new either to the Mughal Emperor or to his subjects. Abul Fazl had called this sublime halo as *kiyan-khura* or *farr-izidi* (Divine Light).[193] Within the context of Hindu iconography, originally halo belonged only to the astral divinities and is known as the *sirascakra* (the halo-circle round the head) and the *prabhavali* (the larger halo round the whole of the divine body). Varahamihira, the author of *Brihat Samhita*, describes the image of *Surya* (Sun) with a *prabhamandala* or *prabhavali*. Many icons of Hindu gods and goddesses in the Gupta period were shown with halo.[194]

The belief of divine kingship automatically implied that the king and his kingship was a gift of God and it represented His will. Qandhari with respect to His Majesty, Akbar's kingship remarked, 'The Almighty has decorated his head with the crown of kingship because He knows who is the deserving person.'[195] Jahangir too in his memoirs, recorded that it was God's will that he sat on the Mughal throne and no conspiracies or ill attempts could divest him of his royal authority, 'the affairs of the kingdom were confirmed in the hands of this suppliant at the throne of Allah'.[196] According to the Emperor:

He who is seized of Fortune cannot be deprived of it;
Throne and diadem are not things of purchase;
It is not right to wrest crown and dominion
From the head which God, the crown-cherisher, has indicated.[197]

Hence the Emperor was blessed with many divine attributes. Those who tried to topple his kingship or disregard royal orders were actually going against the will of God. In his

[192] Symbols and Motifs in the Mughal School of Art, eds. A. Jan Qaisar, S. P. Verma, *Art and Culture, Painting and Perspective*, vol. II, Abhinav Publications, Delhi, 2002, p. 47.
[193] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 3.
[194] Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1973, p. 296.
[195] *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p. 45.
[196] *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 51-52.
[197] Ibid., vol. I, p. 51.

nishan to Mirza Raja Jai Singh, dated 20 November, 1627, Prince Khurram, the heir apparent of Shah Jahan had also voiced a similar thought on the notion of kingship .

> चूँकि अल्लाह तआला की चाहत और इच्छा इस कृत्य में थी कि वंशानुगत साम्राज्य का सिंघासन हमारे कदमों की बरकत (सौभाग्य) से सुसज्जित और हिंदुस्तान का वृस्तृत देश हमारे श्रेष्ठतम सिक्के अवं नाम के ख़ुतबे से संवरे और हम खुदा के प्राणियों के पालन पोषण व समृद्धि में पर्यतनशील रहें अतः उस काम में, कि जिसमें खुदा के प्राणियों की भलाई हो क्योंकि सल्तनत की जड़ें इसी से दृढ़ व शक्तिशाली होती हैं, व्यस्त हुए।[198]

However the belief of divine kingship as an ideological tool to validate power was also used quite effectively by the opponents. When Nadir Shah had invaded Delhi, Ananda Ranga Pillai, a dubash (interpreter) in the service of the French East India Company, regarded the victory of the Persian Shah as 'favoured by Heaven'.[199] The order was sent by Nadir Shah to the Nawab of Surat to stop issuing coins struck by Muhammad Shah and to start issuing coins in his name, with the following words inscribed on them: "By the grace of God, Nadir Shah, Emperor." Nadir Shah owed his victory to God's assistance.[200]

In Mughal Emperors' and court chroniclers' accounts, those who rebelled and thus acted 'against God's will' were referred to as miscreants, 'ill-fated', 'doomed wretch'[201], etc. and were usually given reminders to leave the path of sedition if the rebelled was a royal prince. Princess Jahanara Begum before the Battle of Samugarh in her letter to Aurangzeb wrote, "You should submit yourself to the orders of your benefactor and your ruler, as the commandment of God in that respect refers to obedience to the Emperor."[202]

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[198] फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शाशक, भाग -3, p. 24.

[199] *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai, Dubash to Joseph Francois Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry, A Record of Matters Political, Historical, Social and Personal from 1736-1761*, vol. I, translated from the Tamil by order of the Govt. of Madras, eds. Rev. J. Frederick Price, K. Rangachari, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1904, rep. 1985, p. 93.

[200] Ibid., p. 94.

[201] *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 55.

[202] *The Waqiat-i-Alamgiri of Aqil Khan Razi (An Account of the War of Succession between the Sons of the Emperor Shah Jahan)*, ed. Khan Bahadur Maulvi Haji Zafar Hasan, Mercantile Printing Press, Delhi, 1946, p. 17.

Otherwise, they were awarded very harsh punishments. When Buwa, mother of Ibrahim Lodi, attempted to poison Babur, he in order to punish all the men and women who were a part of the conspiracy, commanded that the taster to be chopped to many pieces while the cook to be skinned alive; a woman was shot by Babur, and another one was thrown under the elephant's feet. Buwa was incarcerated. Later she was handed over to two of his officials, Yunus Ali and Khwajaji Asad and then to Abdul-Rahim Shiqavul. She was deprived of his property and slaves. His grandson, in consequence of her scheme, was removed from the court and sent to Kamran,[203] one of the sons of Babur. He was too punished by his brother, Humayun on account of his repeated disobedience and rebellions against his crowned brother. His half-sister, Gulbadan Begum's account, *Humayun-Nama* unexpectedly ends with Humayun's command to blind Kamran completely.[204] Jouher, the water-carrier of Humayun, too recorded this particular case of blinding of Kamran in *Tezkerem al Vakiat* and the day before he was blinded Jouher was appointed by Humayun to put a guard on him. The time when the royal order was being carried out, Jouher was a witness to this event. He gives a very dreadful description of it.[205] Jahangir too had his rebellious son, Prince Khusrau blinded, though in his memoirs there is no direct mention of his son's blinding.[206]

Not only the rebelled princes were punished severely, but their allies were not spared too. Raja Bir Singh Deo was repeatedly chased by the troops of Akbar on account of his

[203]*Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, pp. 373-75.

[204]Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama*, ed. A. S. Beveridge, London, 1902, New Delhi, rep. 1996, *Humayun-Nama*, p. 201.

[205]Ghulam Aly who received the imperial order of blinding Kamran, 'twisted a handkerchief up as a ball for thrusting into the mouth, and he with the *Ferash* seizing the Prince by the hands, pulled him out of the tent, laid him down and thrust a lancet (*Neshter*) into his eyes (such was the will of God). This they repeated at least fifty times; but he bore the torture in a manly manner, and did not utter a single groan, except when one of the men who was sitting on his knees pressed him; he then said, "why do you sit upon my knees? What is the use of adding to my pain?" This was all he said, and acted with great courage, till they squeezed some (lemon) juice and salt into the sockets of his eyes ; he then could not forbear, and called out, "O Lord, O Lord, my God, whatever sins I may have committed have been amply punished in this world, have compassion on me in the next." ' Jouher soon after the blinding of Kamran, left the scene because he could not endure the pain Kamran was to go through. Jouher, *Tezkerem al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Humayun*, tr. Major Charles Stewart, Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, Delhi, 1972, pp. 105-7.

[206]With reference to his son's continuing efforts to depose him, Jahangir writes that in order to gain support, Khusrau showed men 'parts about his eyes, where at some time he had produced scars, of which the marks were still apparent, and told them that in the prison they had fastened cups (*katori*) on them and those were the marks.' Alexander Rogers, the translator of the memoirs, is certain of Jahangir's this course of action and asks, 'why should this imposter pretend that he had marks of the blinding?' *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 174.

impudence to slay the Emperor's one of the favoured men at the court. Once when he was out with a small group of his men, he was thoroughly chased by the imperial troops.[207] Many of the supporters of the rebelled Prince Khusrau was captured and strictly punished. When Khan Azam who was one of the supporters of the rebellious Prince Khusrau was caught, and brought to the court in chains before Jahangir, he dispossessed him of his property, and ordered the other courtiers to spit on his beard. He was imprisoned in Gwalior fort for two years.[208] Ultimately, when Khusrau was captured he was brought before Jahangir with his hands tied and chains on his legs from the left side after the manner and custom of Chingiz Khan. He ordered the two chief supporters of Khusrau, Hussain Beg and Abdur Rahim who were caught too to be put in the skins of an ox and an ass, and that they should be mounted on asses with their faces to the tail and thus taken round the city. As the ox-hide dried more quickly than that of the ass, Husain Beg died from suffocation. Abdur Rahim, who was in the ass's skin, survived the torment.[209] The offenders were completely degraded at the court. Mahabat Khan, Khan-i-khanan, brought the rebel Jujhar Singh, to the court like a criminal with a halter around his neck.[210]

Geneology and the Establishment of Dynastic Political Rights

A king never had an ordinary genealogy because a lofty genealogy is one of the essential legitimizing devices to establish dynastic political rights. Genealogy during Timurid and post Timurid eras was very important, as contemporary chroniclers 'traced various ruling dynasties' family trees back to a diverse group of significant figures such as Oghuz Khan, Chingiz Khan, Timur, the Imam Musa al-Kazim, and Adam, as part of their legitimacy claims'.[211] The Mughals traced their genealogy from Chingiz Khan and Timur. However, the contemporary chroniclers in order to highlight the steady genealogical tree of the

[207]*Maathir-ul-umara*, vol.I, p. 423.
[208]Joannes De Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, tr. J.S. Hoysland, annotated by S.N. Banerjee, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1928, p. 179.
[209]*The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 68-9.
[210] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 31.
[211]Sholeh A. Quinn, The Timurid Historiographical Legacy: A Comparative Study of Persianate Historical Writing, ed. Andrew J. Newman, *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period*, Koninklijke Brill NV, The Netherlands, 1998, p. 26.

Mughals, had traced the emperor's genealogy from the time of the inception of the human race, i.e. from Adam with a view to validate the rule of the Mughal emperor. Here the assertion was made that the Mughals had inherited the institution called monarchy and that it was not by the means of any fluke or by force that he had come to acquire the royal power. Thus, it is in this context Muhammad Qandhari wrote, 'Monarchy has come down from generation to generation in your (Akbar's) family…the emperor's ancestors right from his father up to Hazrat Adam himself have been either Kings or symbol of kings'.[212] He further explained that Akbar was a seventh generation descendant of Timur[213] and that Akbar being the 'seventh' descendant was a miracle in itself, for the number seven is considered to be sacred in the Perso-Islamicate customs,[214] for God made the sky in seven layers, there are seven planets, seven days and seven metals were obtained from the earth. The *Surat al-Fatiha* of the *Quran* has seven verses (*ayat*), and pilgrims run seven times between Safa and Marwa. Qandhari pointed out to his readers that his main purpose to highlight these facts was 'to convey that the personality of Khaqan Akbar is endowed with infinite superiority'.[215]

Glorious genealogy of a king was an important medium to construct an ideal image of him because that meant the king inherited qualities of his renowned ancestors. Therefore, they traced their lineage through some very prominent warriors and leaders. The Mughal emperor would constantly and deliberately flaunt his celebrated genealogy. Abul Fazl, as already illustrated, through the idea of the Immaculate Conception, had attempted to glorify Mughal kingship by accentuating a link between divinity and regality and the link was established not randomly but in accordance with the 'divine strategy' which was in operation through the means of their ancestors. Fazl wrote:

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[212] *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p.14.
[213] Ibid., p. 14.
[214] The number seven has its symbolic significance not only in Islamic tradition but even in other cultures and communities. In Sufism, a murid (a Sufi disciple) has to pass through seven stages of preparation called *nafs* (literal meaning, breath) so as to alter his ego. The Babylonians had divided the earth into seven parts. In Jewish and Christian traditions, the tree of life has seven branches, and each branch has seven leaves. Hindus have seven circumambulations of fire, *sat phere*, as one of the wedding rituals. The number seven is made of the first even and first odd number (3+4 being the first real numbers), and thus, it is the symbol of all numbers. K. K. Aziz, *The Meaning of Islamic Art: Explorations in Religious Symbolism*, vol. I, Adam Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 757-762.
[215] *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p.15.

> The man of experience knows that many years must elapse before a ruby develop in the embryonic sac of the mine and arrive at maturity, so as to be fit for a royal diadem. How many revolutions of epochs then, and how many cycles, are required before such a priceless pearl and unique jewel, lacking in naught, can obtain his special preparation, so that by ascending steps, he arrive at the fullness of perfection?...In as much as the enlightened and wise of our time find these two supreme gifts in the writing on the luminous forehead of the Lord of the World (Akbar), they quite justly admit their inability to expound his orbit.[216]

Dreams and Divinations

Dreams in the Mughal world were taken as a signifier of the greatness of the personality of the Emperor. Mirza Muhammad Haidar, a cousin of Babur, wrote that true dreams are a mark of God's favour and the recipient of such divine favours is no ordinary personality but the one who has the capability to understand the secrets of the invisible world, implying that his perceiving level is far higher than the general populace. He in order to substantiate his statement gave the names of the Quranic characters who had dreams which actually materialized. Prophet Joseph was informed in his dream about the arrival of his father and brothers many years before the actual event had occurred. Likewise Prophet Muhammad had the revelation of the capture of Mecca in his dream. He further described the dream of Amir Timur which he had when he was to make a war on Ilyas Khwaja Khan in which he was assured of his triumph against his opponent. Later he had won the war which confirmed his belief that it was because of the assistance of divine favour. [217]

And sometimes when the Emperor could not wield his power over his contender, his dreams were potent enough to realize what military might failed to. In 1622, the Persian Shah, Shah Abbas I captured Qandahar from the Mughals. This was also the time when Prince Khurram had rebelled. Jahangir, therefore, could not make an instant assault to recover Qandahar. However, through the commission of a painting which depicted a dream he had, he endeavoured to regain his lost prestige and power and exert his

[216] *The Akbar Nama*, vol. I, p. 36.
[217] *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat: A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*, Academica Asiatica, Patna, 1973, p. 27.

superiority over the Persian Shah. The painting, 'Jahangir's Dream of Shah Abbas's Visit' or 'Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas', painted by Abul Hasan Nadir-i-Zaman 'the wonder of the age' illustrates the meeting of the two rulers; Jahangir embracing the Shah.[218] Though the meeting appears to be amicable, however, through the application of symbolic iconography and the physical stature of the two rulers in the painting a larger and complex theme of status and power was expressed. Jahangir, portrayed taller and with a larger body frame and standing over a lion appears to stand over the frail Shah who is shown standing over a meek sheep. The two animals are seen sitting on a globe but the seated lion absorbs a larger portion of the globe. The complete grasp of Jahangir over the Shah is clearly visible while Shah Abbas could not acquire any grip over the Mughal Emperor. The painting is metaphorically an expression of dominance.[219]

When Babur marched from Kabul towards Qandahar, he left Humayun at Kabul to supervise the administration there. Humayun one day went out riding on his horse along with his tutor, Maulana Masih-ud-din Ruhullah and others. He had an inclination to ask the names of the first three men he would come across while riding. The names of the first three men were: Murad Khwajah, Daulat Khwajah, and Saadat Khwajah. Taking it as an omen, Humayun on becoming the Emperor, divided his officers into three main categories: *Ahl-i-Daulat* (officers of the State) which was comprised of his brothers and other relatives, his officers (*Umara*), ministers (*Wazirs*) and soldiers, *Ahl-i-Sa'adat* (good men), consisting of the holy men, Shaikhs, Saiyids, learned men, Qazis, philosophers, poets, judges, and the nobles and *Ahl-i-Murad* (people of pleasure) which included beautiful young people, musicians and singers. In a same way, he also divided the days of the week and assigned each day to one of the three categories mentioned above.[220]

The ability to control ferocious animals or having them performed as per the wish of the Emperor was also taken as an auspicious omen from God, again symbolically implying the divine favour upon the Emperor. Jouhar recorded that Humayun who always kept a

[218] S. P. Srivastava, *Jahangir – A Connoisseur of Mughal Art*, Abhinav publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 40.
[219]Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 158.
[220] *Qanun-i-Humayuni (also known as Humayun Nama) of Khwandamir*, tr. Baini Prasad, Bibliotheca Indica, A Collection of Oriental Works, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940, pp. 24-6.

cock so as to wake up the courtiers at the crack of the dawn, once said to himself, "if it is the will of fortune to favour me, the cock will mount upon my shoulder, and began to crow; on which his Majesty was much pleased, took the cock in his hands, and put a silver ring on its neck.[221] On his march against the rebellious Ibrahim Husain M., Akbar spotted a deer and it occurred to him that if he caught this deer it would be an indication of victory. So a hunting leopard was let loose and it straight away caught the deer. Later Ibrahim Husain was chastised too.[222] Once on spotting a herd of more than seventy elephants, Akbar took it as a positive omen as he was at that time involved in a campaign against Abdullah Khan of Malwa in 1564. Akbar was successful in capturing those elephants and so did in defeating Abdullah Khan.[223]

The elephant *Hawai*,[224] one of the special elephants of Akbar and was so powerful a beast that many well-experienced drivers feared riding it. Once when Akbar mounted it outside the fort of Agra, it went violent and started fighting against the elephant *Ran Bagha* which almost was his match in qualities. Atagha Khan, the prime minister tried convincing the Emperor to dismount immediately but Akbar did not. The elephant *Ran Bagha* ran away from the spot but *Hawai* followed it until they reached the head of the bridge on the river Yamuna. The terrified *Ran Bagha* went on to the bridge and *Hawai* followed it again. Fortunately both safely traversed the bridge and *Ran Bagha* somehow managed to escape from there.[225] In another time, once when Birbal was attacked by a raging elephant, Akbar came rushing to save him. In his endeavour to protect Birbal, he attracted the berserk animal towards him. Howbeit, suddenly, "it stood still, overcome by the majestic "*Avaunt*" (*Durbash*)." [226]

The deliberate and repeated actions of Akbar of endangering his life (as explained by him) was due to the reason that he wanted to keep testing himself and knowing the will of God, "our knowingly and intentionally mounting on *mast*, murderous elephants when

[221]Jouhar, *Tezkerem al vakiat or private memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, p. 89.
[222]*Akbar Nama*, vol. III, p. 18.
[223]Ibid., vol. II, p. 343.
[224] The elephant, Hawai was one of the best Hemu owned. It was later sent to the imperial stable of Akbar when Hemu was defeated and executed after the second battle of Panipat in 1556.
[225]*Akbar Nama*, vol. II, pp. 233-34.
[226]Ibid., vol. III, p. 654.

they have a moment previous brought their drivers under their feet and killed them, and when they have slain many a man, has this for its cause and motive that if I have knowingly made an aspiration which was not according to His pleasure, may that elephant finish us, for we cannot support the burden of life under God's displeasure."[227] Thus the narrow escape of Akbar from his such intentional and hazardous deeds was for Akbar a sign from God that so far he had been just in carrying out his functions as an Emperor and therefore, it was God's will that Akbar continue to rule the Empire.

Bernier informs that it was when the Emperor was able to successfully hunt lions, it was 'considered a favourable omen' while on the other hand, by any reason the getting away of the beast meant an extremely bad omen 'portentous of infinite evil to the state' and this was 'attended with much grave ceremony.' This was the reason why when a lion escaped during the hunt, Shahjahan did not rest till the time he had captured the escaped lion.[228]

Hunting or taming wild, ferocious and giant beasts was not only reflective of good or bad omen, but simultaneously it was a means of striking a sense of wonder among the people for it implied that the Emperor was fully capable of subduing even the most feared. In his presence the wild and feared too behaved obediently and therefore, nothing else could be more fearful and powerful than he himself. Abul Fazl in his deliberate attempt to glorify His Majesty stressed on unbelievable and extraordinary gift of Akbar to be able to tame the wild and feared animals effortlessly. He credited Akbar for being able to make leopards docile within just a few days time while before his rule, the rulers took months to do the same:

> In former times people managed to train a newly caught leopard for the chase in the space of three months, or if they exerted themselves, in two months. From the attention which His Majesty pays to this animal, leopards are now trained in an excellent manner in the short space of eighteen days. Old and active keepers were surprised at such results, and extolled the charm of His Majesty's knowledge. From good motives, and from a desire to add splendour to his court, HM used to

[227]Ibid., vol. II, pp. 234-25.
[228]Bernier, pp. 379-80.

take it upon himself to keep and train leopards, astonishing the most experienced by his success.[229]

He recorded other several instances of such astonishing feat of Akbar:

> Once a leopard had been caught, and without previous training, on a mere hint by HM, it brought in the prey like trained leopards. Those who were present had their eyes opened to truth, and experienced the blessing of prostrating themselves in belief on His Majesty.[230]

> Attracted by the wonderful influence of the loving heart of HM, a leopard once followed the imperial suite without collar or chain, and like a sensible human being, obeyed every command, and at every leopard chase enjoyed it very much to have its skill brought to the test.[231]

> A remarkable scene took place in the forest of Mathura. Shuja'at Khan, who had advanced very far, got suddenly timid. His Majesty remained standing where he was, and looked furiously at the tiger. The brute cowered down before that divine glance, and turned right about trembling all over.[232]

A similar kind of tone is evident in Jahangir's memoirs as well.

> As in the time of my reign wild beasts have abandoned their savagery, tigers have become so tame that troops of them without chains or restraint go about amongst the people, and they neither harm men nor have any wildness or alarm.'[233]

> However, the ability of the Emperor to subdue the fiercest forces did not implicate that the weak would not be protected. The Emperor was powerful and feared to protect the meek. 'He slays lions, but would not hurt an ant.[234]

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[229] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 297.
[230]Ibid, vol. I, p. 297.
[231]Loc. cit.
[232]Ibid., p. 294.
[233]*The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 240.
[234]*The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 294.

Ritual: A Vehicle to Communicate Imperial Ideology

Ideology can be communicated through rituals which could support a range of myths, metaphors, allegories and allusions.[235] Richard Barnett while speaking of the relevance of an ideology says that its potency is visible from the fact that it can structure an individual's sense of reality or of their arguments to change that reality and thus, it can become a political resource for obtaining and sustaining political legitimacy and authority, for mobilizing collaborators and subduing dissents. Once perceptions of reality are constructed through the means of ideology, those who formulated them come into control of right or established views on different issues, imposing their sense of right and wrong on those who display deviant modes of behaviour.[236] While Steven Michael Lukes, a political and social theorist, highlighting the cognitive facets of ritual, asserts that ritual defines 'authoritative certain ways of seeing society: it serves to specify what in society is of special significance, it draws people's attention to certain forms of relationships and activity—at the same time, therefore, it deflects their attention from other forms, since every way of seeing it is also a way of not seeing.'[237] Maurice Bloch's analysis of the ceremonial royal bath in the nineteenth-century Madagascar shows that rituals are important not merely because they added splendour or pomp as explained by Clifford Geertz in his study of Bali but because they had the ideological and emotive power.[238]

In a monarchical set up, royal ritual was one of the mechanisms for expressing imperial ideology with a purpose to legitimate monarch's rule. When the ideology of kingship is constructed through a set of rituals, in that case, they can prove to be a very effective political resource for a king because rituals have the capability to transform the image of an ordinary human into a divine or near divine king. In accordance with the Mughal

[235] Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 84.
[236] Peter Hardy, Max Weber and the Patrimonial Empire in Islam: The Mughal Case, Toby. E Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter, *Max Weber and Islam*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, 1999, p. 201.
[237] Gro Steinsland, Introduction. Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes, Gro Steinsland, Gro, Jon Vidar Sigurdsson, Jan Erik Rekdal and Beuermann, Ian; *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, Koninklijke Brill, The Netherlands, 2011, p. 8.
[238] David Cannadine, 'Introduction', eds. David Cannadine and Simon Price, *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 11.

imperial ideology, rituals were formulated, re-formulated and adopted. The imperial ideology was the reflection of the fabricated and lofty concepts of kingship and image of a ruler; involuntarily it meant that it intended to conceal the ruler's ordinariness or the true nature of his to fulfil his political ambitions. Therefore, even though monarchy is a man-made institution but by a series of rituals which were constitutive of imperial ideology, it was made to believe that monarchy was not made but was born, chosen by God and this could be achieved because rituals are transforming in character. A monarch is transformed into a divine or semi-divine figure; his genealogy, his public image, his dreams, etc. were a part of a divine favour to him. Only a true king was a recipient of divine favours and his legitimate power could not be usurped by a false king or dissenters. Conspirators or scheming princes' unsuccessful attempts or the capture of their person was seen as an evidence of their evil design. Their treatment at the Mughal court was harsh. They were brought in chains at the court and were paraded on the street, making a public spectacle of them.

Rituals are potent enough to generate and support polarities, just as ideologies can create demarcation. In the Mughal courtly culture, the practice of rituals of royalty marked what was sacred and what was profane. Both, the sacred and the profane were brought together; the two functioning together. Court rituals enabled to endow the person of the Emperor with sanctity as well as the space (mainly the court) where he performed them. Likewise, they also facilitated distance and closeness between the superior and subordinate. The level of participation in rituals signalled the social hierarchy; it exhibited the ones who were included and excluded. This led to demarcation among men in which the monarch with his divine attributes is placed at the highest pedestal of hierarchy. Public demonstration of the social status of the nobles in the pecking order of the court was achieved through rituals, for rituals themselves were 'a visual sign of the hierarchy of officialdom'.[239] And this display further aided in re-generating and safeguarding one's social rank.

[239] Averil Cameron, 'The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies', eds. David Cannadine and Simon Price, *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 130.

In every court society, emphasis was laid upon etiquette, codes of conduct, behaviour, speech, and the likes specifically for the elites of the courts. Books, manuals, etc. were prepared with guidelines regarding manners and protocols. In the Mughal courtly circle, works on such themes were called *akhlaq* literature. Ceremonies and rituals were another mode to indoctrinate prescribed norms. 'Good behaviour', made a courtier 'civilized', thus, creating an exclusive group.[240] But the notion of good behaviour not only creates an exclusive group of civilized people but simultaneously it also generates another group, viz., brute or uncivilized people. The Mughal court was the space so refined that even a brute could be civilized here. And this necessitated the person to be personally present at the court for at some days and learn courtly manners by learning his placement in courtly rituals. In the following chapters, we will see in details how Mughal court rituals supported a range of imperial ideologies.

[240] Stephen Mennell, *Norbert Elias, Civilization and the Human Self-Image*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, p. 38.

Figure 1.1

Tarjuma-i-Sirr al Makhtum, from the Raza Library, Rampur
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi

Figure 1.2

Madonna and Child, c. 1615 A.D.
Picture Post Card, Indian Museum, Kolkata

Figure 1.3

Jahangir's Stirrup is grasped by an Angel
Painted by Govardhan, c. 1611
Exhibition: 'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library', 22nd November-31st December 2013
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi

CHAPTER II

The name and fame of emperors rise high by their lofty edifices. Thus the saying has been well known that the names of kings remain alive for ages on account of their buildings.

—Muhammad Arif Qandhari, '*Tarikh-i-Akbari*'[241]

Every kind of polity—hunting-gathering society, city-states, territorial states, seaborne empires, etc. absorb some sort of space.[242] Topography[243] has been regarded as 'a science of domination', fixing and authenticating frontiers, safeguarding norms and considering 'questionable social conventions' as 'questioned social facts'.[244] Therefore geographical or physical setting for the power wielders is extremely relevant. The Red Fort at Delhi is still seen as a symbol of state sovereignty. It is from here on the night of 15 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first Prime Minister addressed the people delivered a historic speech, *Tryst with Destiny* to declare India' independence from the British rule and since then in order to commemorate the day when India became a republic and its constitution came into effect, Republic Day is celebrated every year. The next day i.e. on 16 August, 1947, Nehru hoisted the national flag on the ramparts of the fort in a huge gathering of about one million people. The delivering of the speech on such a momentous event and later hoisting the national flag from the Red fort was 'a highly symbolic act' according to the Historian, Jim Masselos, for it connoted 'continuity with a past' and linked with 'the imperial grandeur of the Mughals' and thus, 'the new state was legitimised'. He maintains while highlighting the significance of declaring the news of India's independence to the world and hoisting the Indian flag from this pivotal location, 'locating of the main independence day gathering at the fort asserts an historical legitimacy to the new nation and implies an identity that does not derive from the British

[241] *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, p. 180.
[242] Agnew, John, Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority, *Contemporary World Politics, Annals of the Association of the Association of American Geographers*, 95: 2, Routledge, London, p. 441.
[243] The Oxford Universal Dictionary describes the term as the science or practice of describing a particular place, city, town, manor, parish, or tract of land, Duncan, James and Ley, David, Introduction, Representing the Place of Culture, eds. Duncan, James and Ley, David, *Place/Culture/Representation*, Routledge, London and New York, p. 1.
[244] *Place/Culture/Representation*, p. 1.

inter-regnum'.[245] After breaking the yoke of the British colonial rule in India, the Indian government sought to acquire its legitimacy by tracing its continuity with the Mughals. Occupying a piece of land is not enough; it is of utmost significance to legitimize the occupation.

Axis-mundi and the Utopian World

To understand the Mughal notion of geographical space and its application to validate their power, one needs to examine their world view. In the painting, *'Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas'*, the painter, Abul Hasan depicts his master, Jahangir along with the Persian Shah standing on a globe. Geographically the Indian subcontinent and the Persian Gulf which occupy the centre of the globe are shown with precision even though at the time when the painting was commissioned, globe was an extremely uncommon object in this part of the world. The globe in the painting is 'not centered on Europe' in order 'to undermine the apparent European-ness of this object, opening up possibilities for an oppositional biography to emerge for this Western import'[246] and that 'European advances in map-making had been transmitted to Mughal India'.[247] The Mughal concepts of kingship and power were borrowed from multiple sources, bearing no exact analogous meaning and implication. Jahangir used a European device, globe and reworked its meaning in order to strengthen his political agendas and thus made the device a part of Mughal expression of power and sovereignty. The icon of globe had been frequently used in Mughal paintings since the reign of Jahangir. Jahangir, though usually keen to receive gifts and curiosities, had returned Sir Thomas Roe's gift of a map-book.[248] Roe's chaplain Edward Terry too had recorded of the similar case and perceived the cause of the return of the gift in the following words:

…he calling himfelf the Conqueror of the World, and having no greater fhare in it, feemed to be a little troubled…

[245] Tan Tai Yong and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, p. 59.
[246] Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 49, No. 4, Oct., 2007, Cambridge University Press, p. 755.
[247] *India before Europe*, p. 158.
[248] Sir Thomas Roe, p. 382.

And the truth is that the Great Mogol might very well bring his action againft Mercator and others who defcribe the world, but ftreighten him very much in their maps, not allowing him to be lord and commander of thofe provinces which properly belong unto him.[249]

The Atlas which Sir Thomas Roe presented to Jahangir was Mercator's Atlas as his chaplain, Edward Terry informs in his account. Maps in the Atlas, prepared by the Flemish geographer and cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569, are Euro-centric. [250] Likewise, the paintings like *'Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas'* were a means to satiate the Mughal Emperor's claims of world conqueror and reclaim his lost possession even though in reality he had lost Qandhar to the Shah of Persia. The appropriation of the geographic globe[251] as a visual and allegorical representation of a ruler's domination in the world can be seen in many other paintings commissioned by other powerful rulers of the world. Elizabeth I of England was depicted in such a manner in a painting called Armada Portrait in which she is portrayed as claiming the globe after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.[252] In the portrait the Queen is seen with her right hand placed on a globe, suggestive of her and her country's authority in the world.[253] In another portrait of the Queen, Ditchley Portrait painted by Marcus Gheerhaerts in about 1592, she is shown standing on a globe, symbolizing the increasing territorial conquests and power

[249] Edward Terry, p. 351.

[250] Maps in Mercator's Atlas make the Southern Hemisphere look smaller than the Northern Hemisphere. Europe is shown larger than South America than it really is while Greenland is made to appear bigger than China. Mark Monmonier, *Drawing the Line: Tales of Maps and Controversy*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1995, pp. 17-18.

[251] The earliest atlas of India, *Shahid-i Sadiq* (Sadiq's Witness) prepared by Muhammad Sadiq Isfahani in 1646-47 at Jaunpur shows the Caspian Sea and Persia located at the centre on an introductory world map. Africa and Andalusia are placed on the west side of the map while on the east side lie India, Turkestan and China. The Earliest Indian Atlas in *The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library*, 22 November-31 December 2013, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.

[252] After the decisive victory of England against the Spanish Armada in 1588, Spain's dominance over the European continent subsided. England under the rule of Elizabeth I emerged as a world power. The success facilitated the English territorial expansion into North America and India. Michael Lee Lanning, *The Battle 100: The Stories Behind History's Most Influential Battles*, Sourcebooks Inc., Illinois, 2003, 2005 rep., pp. 54, 57.

Another notable outcome of the defeat of the Spanish Armada was that it infused the English with greater sense of patriotism. The victory was viewed as God's judgment in favour of England by many Europeans. Judith Kidd, Rosemary Rees and Ruth Tudor, *Heinemann History Scheme, The Early Modern World*, Heinemann Educational Publishers, Oxford, 2000, p. 12.

[253] Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, 'Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I', eds. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn, *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in England Culture*, c. 1540-1660, Reaktion Books, London, 1990 (Ist pub.), rep. 1995, p. 15.

of England.[254] Thus globes or maps represented not only spaces or geographical areas but captured events.[255] Rulers commissioning such paintings projected their territory occupying the central space of the globe in order to heighten their respective notion of self and other and the idea of power and authority. In the Mughal versions of the depiction of globe, Europe remained an insignificant, off-lying region while that of European versions focused on Europe and the areas they had conquered. Therefore, lands (that fall under the control of a ruler or outside his authority) were not plainly physical geography. Carl Sauer, a renowned geographer who developed his theory on cultural landscapes or geography defines land as 'products of both topographical forms and human activity'.[256]

In the world history of kingdoms and kings, often the central space of the world and its acquisition by projecting one's own territory in the centre were used as a device to accentuate their power vis-à-vis other kingdoms. Accordingly, their kingdoms were denoted as Middle Kingdom. And within their kingdoms, their capital cities were considered as an axis mundi or the centre of the world. Within the cities, their residential palaces were even more sacred while the palaces sheltered some spaces which were graded extremely sacred. To prove this, axis mundi symbolisms were evoked in such places. The Mughals too perceived their imperial cities and their imperial court as an axis mundi.[257] The notion continued to be employed even in the times of the later Mughals.[258] And it is owing to their belief in this notion that the Mughal Emperors took hyperbolic titles denoting their dominance over the world. Their court was the visible site of power

[254] Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Power of Projections: How Maps Reflect Global Politics and History*, Praeger, Connecticut, 2006, p. 29.
[255] D. J. Hopkins, *City/Stage/Globe, Performance and Space in Shakesperare' London*, Routledge, New York, Oxon, 2008, p. 18.
[256] Gary Fields, Enclosure *Landscapes: Historical Reflections on Palestinian Geography, Historical Geography*, vol. 39, 2011, p. 182. Likewise, Donald Meining describes landscape as 'composed not only by what lies before our eyes, but also what lies in our heads'. Edward Said too delineates landscape as 'a material phenomenon' but 'fundamentally invented and imagined' by the powerful, endeavouring to find authority over places and people. He termed it "imaginative geography". The powerful 'reinvent meanings' and 'frame discourses' rationalizing their territorial ambitions and claims. Ibid., p. 185.
[257] Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639-1739*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 30.
[258] In a letter to Amir-ul-Umara Husain Ali Khan, one of the Saiyyid brothers, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, amidst the unstable political condition and the rising centrifugal tendencies, addressed the court as the centre of the Universe. Mehta Balmukund, *Letters of a King-Maker of the Eighteenth Century, Balmukund Nama*, tr. Satish Chandra, Asia Publishing House, London, 1972, p. 115.

and therefore, it was imperative to make this visible site of power influential and forceful through signs infused with imperial ideologies. The Mughal architectural space especially the Mughal court was the manifestation of an ideal Mughal world which advocated that the utopian world which others talk about as either inaccessible or distant was indeed a reality in their realm. Often the Emperors in their *farmans*[259] and the court chroniclers would describe the imperial court as paradise. Jahangir addressed the court of his father and that of his own as 'paradise-like assembly'[260] and he referred to himself as 'visible Deity'[261]. It was this utopian world as projected by the Mughals the iconography visible at the court represented.

Keeping in mind the fundamental cognitive orientation of the Mughals, their architectural commissions cannot be plainly dismissed as Islamic though the impact of the Islamic traditions too cannot be denied. It is said that the Mughal inscriptions on their architectural buildings, especially from Akbar to Shah Jahan accord the Islamic myths and beliefs a light treatment and even 'deride' the notion of paradise as illustrated in the Quran.[262] However the Quran seems to have proved as one of the many major influences on the development of the Mughal architectural edifices. The application of the belief in physical and metaphysical world, the revealed and the concealed or a material and a supernatural world in architecture and that architectural monuments bear body (represented by sacred geometrical pattern) and soul (represented by light, colour, sound effects, landscape and symbolism) make the Islamic architectural undertaking a spiritual enterprise.[263] The Mughals taking into account of this, very meticulously explored a broad range of other sources in order to generate and re-generate their idea of kingship. A wide range of sources they tapped whether foreign and indigenous, religious and pagan, mythical and rational, etc. facilitated them to acquire a sustained success, simultaneously making their architectural undertakings, as exquisite and appealing to huge audience. The European visitors at the court were often left so awestruck by the magnificence of the

[259] Shah Jahan's *farman* to Mirza Raja Jai Singh, dated 8 February, 1634, *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शाशक*, भाग -1, p. 64.
[260] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 80.
[261] Ibid., vol. I, p. 81.
[262] R. Nath, *History of Mughal Architecture*, vol. IV, p. 252.
[263] Abdul Rehman, 'The Grand Tradition of Islamic Architecture', eds. Attilio Petroccioli and Khalil K. Pirani, *Understanding Islamic Architecture*, Routledge Curzon, Oxon, 2002, rep. 2008, p. 28.

Mughal architecture that to their European world view it was difficult to fathom such beauty in such a faraway place. What they found exquisite became a piece of beauty executed by some European architect. In *Delhie Book* or *Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi*, commissioned by Sir Thomas Metcalfe, Governor-Generals' Agent at the court of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Metcalfe writes, 'It is generally admitted that architects from Europe were employed in constructing the Magnificent Palaces of Agra and Dehly.'[264] The Album says that the pietra dura work rendered at the back of the royal throne in the *Diwan-i-am* contain an image of Orhpeus and hence, undoubtedly the work of a European artist.

The Mughals were great builders and as Catherine B. Asher puts it, 'Under no other Islamic dynasty do we see such widespread construction of imperial palaces'.[265] The architecture built by them (especially under the reign of Shah Jahan) represented the Emperors' imagined visions as they envisioned and to understand the Mughal architecture, it becomes imperative that the architectural undertakings of the Mughal Emperors should not only be studied and examined as their endeavour to create mere physical space but beyond. Architecture and its history are not an isolated study. The Mughal architecture contains layers of meanings and symbolisms, making the style distinct. To unravel them, one needs to understand the Mughal perception of time, chronology and space which was at variance with that of the western world.

French artist Pascal Monteil whose art work deals with a study and reinterpretation of Persian and Indian miniature paintings, observes that one of the very less highlighted aspects of paintings in the West and those made in the East is the way reality was depicted. Though the painters of Europe and Asia had the world before them with similar facets like people, architecture, nature, etc. but the representation of such facets was not similar. The Western world was keener in conquering what eyes could see and what mind

[264] *Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi (Composed by the Emperor Bahadur Shah and addressed to the Governor General Agent at Delhie, February 1843)*. It is an Album containing Company paintings done by Indian artists to which Metcalfe included elaborate descriptions. The Album was sent to his daughter as a gift. It is now at the British Library.

[265] Catherine B. Asher, 'Sub-Imperial Palaces: Power and Authority in Mughal India', *Ars Orientalis*, vol. 23, Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces, Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1993, p. 281.

could perceive. The painters were engaged in imitating the visible world and in controlling chronological time which was seen as linear progression. Therefore, the paintings had features like perspective, precise moments, depth of field, shadows and the use of mathematical calculation to draw images with enough exactitude. The painters from the East endeavoured to do away with the attempt to capture images with precision. The paintings tried to convey reality through illusion and not through the exact representation of an event or a figure.[266] Accordingly the Mughal miniature paintings as well as their architecture and contemporary court accounts represented their worldview which was communicated symbolically.

Mughal architecture like the Mughal paintings enjoyed royal patronage.[267] As painters were instructed in their work, the architects too were not permitted to bring their innovation. Like their paintings, their architecture too was reflective of the Emperor's intent and state ideologies. The Mughals used to take a very keen interest in what they had commissioned. They would not accept anything that was not remarkable and in accordance with their taste and purpose. The memoirs of the Mughal Emperors or their court chronicles record many references to the imperial orders for the construction of gardens, mosques, palaces, etc. Babur would punish men in charge of the activities assigned to them with respect to the construction of a structure. In his memoirs, he mentioned that since the task of the construction of a garden wall and well buildings at Sikri was not in the manner he wanted, 'the overseers were punished and threatened'.[268] Jahangir in his memoirs giving the reason[269] Akbar selected Sikri as his imperial capital, highlighted his father's prowess and that how the deserted and wild land was tamed and

[266] Pascal Monteil, 'The World Upside Down: Modes of Representation in the East and the West', Experimental Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, 19 December 2015, International Photography Workshop.

[267] At least till the reign of Aurangzeb, the Mughal contemporary accounts notify that the architectural undertakings were performed under the Mughal Emperor's patronage. Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture, An Outline of its History and Development (1526-1858)*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, p. 13.

[268] *The Baburnama*, p. 418.

[269] Till the age of 28 years, Akbar had no son to inherit his empire. The anxious Emperor desperate to be blessed with a heir, took a pledge that if he should be favoured by Allah with a son, he would traverse on foot from Agra to the *dargah* of Shaikh Moinuddin Chisti, Ajmer. It was a place near Sikri that Akbar in 1569 met a Sufi saint, Shaikh Salim Chisti who prophesied that the Emperor would have three sons. Soon Akbar's first son, Jahangir was born. Akbar named him Salim after the Shaikh's name. He also selected the place of the birth of his son, Sikri as his imperial capital, for he considered it to be 'lucky for him'. *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 1-2.

metamorphosed into a refined and aesthetic space under his command. He wrote, "In the course of fourteen or fifteen years that hill, full of wild beasts, became a city containing all kinds of gardens and buildings, and lofty, elegant edifices and pleasant places, attractive to the heart".[270] In the *Shahjahan Nama*, the author distinctly records the Emperor's personal involvement in citing the location for a structure, the kind of structures to be built, the pattern, etc. Before the construction of the fort at the new metropolis, Shahjahanabad, the historian Inayat Khan writes that owing to the city's 'genial climate', the Emperor had chosen the site for his fort. And not only he had determined the site but also envisaged the way it was to be constructed with channels of water made to move continuously through the fort and its terraces facing the river.[271] With the succession of each regime, there were elements of continuity and change as per the personality and beliefs of the reigning Emperor, enriching the Mughal architectural language.

Architecture expressed their ideology, their world view; structures were constructed not merely for technical purpose. Their architecture defined the physical space—what was public and what marked as private; how certain spaces like their capital cities acquired sanctity and reverence while others remain mundane. And even within the sacred spaces, some physical spaces became more scared than the others. *Diwan-i-am* and *diwan-i-khas*, both were audience halls but a very few were permitted inside the latter owing to a gradation of sacredness.[272] Buildings associated with a ruler or the head of a state was a great marker of his standing. As the seat and emblem of power, opponents targeted their demolition.[273]

[270]Ibid., p. 2.
[271] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 406.
[272] Emile Durkheim in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life while explaining the dichotomy of sacred and profane stresses, "The more sacred repels the less sacred, but this is because, compared to the first, the second is profane". A sacred being or an object is more sacred or less sacred in relation to other sacred beings and objects. Daniella Gandolfo, *The City at its Limits: Taboo, Transgression, and Urban Renewal in Lima*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009.
[273] The Bahmanis devastated the imperial palace of the Vijaynagar in 1565 during the battle of Talikkottai. Jennifer Howes, *Courts of Pre-Colonial South India: Material Culture and Kingship*, Routledge, London, New York, 2004, p. 48. Likewise, after the Battle of 1857, many structures in the Red Fort of Shahjahanabad were destroyed. Jean Marie Lafont, Rehana Lafont, *The French & Delhi, Agra, Aligarh and Sardhana*, India Research Press, New Delhi, 2010, p. 151.

Not only for a King but also for his courtiers, it was of utmost consequence that they erect buildings and their abodes befitting their power and position. The author of the *Darbar-i-Akbari* while enumerating the qualities of a noble, points out that a noble's house in no way was to be built in a manner that lacked extravagance. 'एक मकान बनाने में जान-बुझ कर किसी अच्छे हेतु से भी कुछ कम खर्च करेगा, तो कहनेवाले अवश्य कह देंगे कि साहब यह क्या जाने । कभी इसके बापदादा ने किया होता तो यह भी जानता । कभी कुछ देखा होता तो जानता ।'[274] A similar opinion is echoed in the writings of Norbert Elias on the French court society. He stresses that it may appear unfathomable that how people do not hesitate to destroy themselves in order to construct and maintain the physical appearance of their houses but in an aristocratic society, the mansion of an aristocrat, from its size to its luxury is certainly a marker of wealth but most importantly, of 'rank' and 'status'.[275] Therefore a man who held the rank of a duke must be the owner of the kind of abode which declared the world: 'I am a duke and not merely a count' and that a duke 'who does not live as a duke has to live, who can no longer properly fulfil [*sic.*] the social duties of a duke, is hardly a duke any longer' because in a court society, each member is engaged in 'a ceaseless struggle for power and prestige'.[276]

In the domain of the Mughal Emperor, it was him who would give orders for the construction or deconstruction of the forts and mansions and also for the eviction. Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Sadullah Khan were assigned by Shah Jahan to deconstruct the Chittor

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However before the sovereign realm of the Mughal Emperor, the Red Fort could be penetrated by the British i.e. after the Battle of 1857, the East India Company was able to acquire the Delhi-Agra region along with some other territories through the Treaty of Surji-Anjangaon signed between the British and Daulat Rao Sindhia, the Maratha Chief at Anjangaon on December 30, 1803. Yet the Company could not bring the royal palace of the Mughals at Shahjahanabad under their control. Thomas Metcalfe, the Company's Resident at Delhi, out of utter exasperation, alleged the fort to be a sanctuary for malefactors, beggars, prostitutes and corrupt people. Natasha Eaton, *Mimesis across Empires, Artworks and Networks in India, 1765-1860*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2013, p. 240.

[274] *अकबरी दरबार*, अनुवादक रामचन्द्र वर्मा, तीसरा भाग, नागरी प्रचारिणी सभा, कशी, १९६७, पृ॰ २३७ ।

[275] Nobert Elias, *The Court Society*, p. 53.

[276] Ibid., pp. 63-4.

fort repaired by the Maharana.[277] In the later Mughal period, Raja Girdhar Bahadur who was a nephew of Raja Chhabela Ram, subahdar of Allahabad was asked to vacate the fort of Allahabad on account of his misconduct. The imperial order to vacate the fort was a mark of humiliation for the Raja and therefore, 'being much ashamed of the hesitation which he had previously shown in evacuating the fort, has asked that his sins be pardoned'. The Raja was pardoned and was also given the *subahdari* of Awadh. However later he vacated the fort after becoming the recipient of imperial favours which compensated the loss of his fort.[278]

The works of the historians on the Mughal architecture reckon its forms, designs, colour and materials to be filled with their intended meanings. The choice of the material for the construction of a structure was not arbitrary but it was very carefully selected. For the construction of the Mughal buildings both, red sandstone and marble as building materials were used. During Akbar's period red sandstone was used predominantly while white marble was reserved for decorative purpose and for funerary architecture like the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chisti at Fatehpur Sikri. The reign of Jahangir too made use of marbles for the tombs as we see in the case of the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula, the father of Nur Jahan, though in his period there was acceleration in its application. By the reign of Shah Jahan most of the Mughal structures were made of marble.[279] The material used in the construction, the architectural style, symbolism and iconicity, a range of ideas and their complexity and implications reveal spatial hierarchy. *Diwan-i-am* and *diwan-i-khas* marked public and private spaces. Spaces acquire significance through the means of their exceptional size, unique shape and a strategic location.[280] And also ceremonies and protocols which were performed at different locations and structures of their forts upgraded the image and prestige of the Emperor. Structures were added or new features

[277] Shah Jahan's *farman*, dated 13 September 1654. *A Descriptive of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans addressed by the Imperial Mughals to the Prince of Rajasthan*, p. 10.
[278] *Balmukund Nama*, p. 52.
[279] Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*, London, 2006, pp. 215-7. Also see, Andrew Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 200.
[280] Francis D. K. Ching, *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*, John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey, 2007, p. 358.

were brought to an already existing structure so as to accommodate the rituals, upholding the notions of kingship.

Jharoka Window or Balcony

In the times of Akbar, there was not any particular building which was associated with the ritual, *jharoka darshan*. Abul Fazl describes a structure called *Do-Ashiyana manzil* which was used for multiple purposes. *Jharoka darshan* was one of the many tasks which were performed there. This was the ritual which the Mughal Emperors from Akbar's reign would show themselves from a balcony or a window to his subjects, assuring them his well-being. The Emperor would come to the balcony for the *darshan* twice a day as one of the essential parts of his daily kingly duties.[281] It was used for other important administrative purposes like dispensing justice, viewing animal combats, etc.[282] The regular appearance of the Emperor at a balcony simultaneously created a gradation of sacredness. The admittance of certain people to certain places of the fort and till what level signified hierarchy as well as verified the notion of sanctity and profanity. The Emperor was always placed at the higher or elevated platform, indicating his superior status in the court society. When he would observe the *jharoka darshan* ritual, he would be placed at the window of a building. He would be giving his *darshan* to all his assembled subjects whether high or low from an extremely raised platform and the distance between the two (the Emperor and his subjects) was quite wide. Those who were gathered to have a *darshan* of their Emperor were not admitted inside the fort. Badauni called this set of people as 'vile, swindling, wicked birds'.[283] The subjects were given the audience of the Emperor but through the means of strategic placements a sharp distance was maintained. Therefore how an edifice and its architectural features along with a series of actions performed there were utilized contributed to creating a superior profile of the Emperor.

[281] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 165.
[282] It was when Shah Jahan had come to give an audience from the jharoka balcony at Akbarabad or Agra, the Emperor had ordered for an elephant-combat. *The Waqiat-i-Alamgiri of Aqil Khan Razi*, p. 7.
[283] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 211.

From the study of the paintings on *jharoka darshan*, one can gather information on its evolution. *Jharoka* paintings started from Akbar's period.[284] The *jharoka* scenes from Akbar's period show no uniformity in terms of the settings and the form. The paintings are usually set either in an open space on the roof of a palace building or at a window of an upper-story. *Jharoka* paintings during Jahangir's rule became a popular subject matter.[285] They contain more precision in dealing with the portrayal of certain architectural feature of the *jharoka* building. However, the architectural setting for the *jharoka* in the Mughal paintings by the time of Shah Jahan appear not only to be the realistic representation of the actual buildings but at the same time, the study of the increased architectural features show the richness in symbolism associated with kingship. The compositional plan for the representation of the Emperor in the *jharoka* is similar in the *jharoka* paintings done by different painters. In such paintings, the Emperor is shown occupying a central space in the *jharoka*. The *jharoka* structure has a rounded dome on top of the structure. Before the cupola is a canopy and below the Emperor is the congregation of courtiers in two groups facing each other. This elemental plan was fashioned on the actual architecture of the buildings. Therefore, some variations are visible in the architectural features which were done in order to assimilate the traits of a particular place.

The orientation of the structure for the purpose of *jharoka* is also a significant aspect of the Mughal kingship. At Fatehpur Sikri during the reign of Akbar the balcony selected for showing himself to his subjects would be east-facing. Majority of his subjects who would come to have the *darshan* of the Emperor were Hindus for whom the direction is

[284] Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World, The Padshahnama, An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library*, tr. Wheeler Thackston, Windsor Castle, Sackler Gallery, Thames and Hudson, p. 133.

[285] Some of the *jharoka* paintings commissioned during Jahangir's period include *Jahangir at the Jharoka Window of the Agra Fort*, folio from the *Jahangirnama*, painted in 1620 by Nadir-uz-Zaman Abu'l Hasan, now at the Aga Khan Museum, *Jahangir Bare-chested at a Jharoka Window*, again painted in 1620, Raza Library, Rampur.

sacred.[286] Thus the orientation of a building was also significant for securing the support of the populace.

Diwan-i-am

This was a huge pillared audience hall, placed on an elevated platform which was about four feet above the ground. Because of the presence of multiple pillars in the hall, it was also known as *Chihil Sutun* or Forty-pillared. And though it was called *Chihil Sutun*, the number of columns was not forty in number. Tavernier records that the marble pillars which were about four feet square were thirty-two in number.[287] Before Shah Jahan had shifted his imperial capital to Shahjahanabad, at the Agra or the Akbarabad fort he ordered for the construction of *Chihil-Sutun*. Inayat Khan's *Shah Jahan Nama* elucidates the purpose for the construction of the structure:

> However, during the reigns of the late Emperors Akbar and Jahangir, no coverings had existed over the area reserved for those standing in the royal presence; and accordingly many had to bear the hardship of rain in the monsoon, and heat in the summer. To alleviate this, His Majesty ordered a spacious Forty-Pillared Hall (*Chihil-Sutun*) to be built; and it was completed on the 4th of Zi'l-Hijja this year 1037 (5 August 1628). Orders were issued that a similar hall should be built in front of the balcony at the Lahore capital…'[288]

The structure was based on the remains of Persepolis bearing the same name (*Chihil Sutun*). Based on the examination of *darbar* scenes and contemporary poetic compositions, the new addition to the *diwan-i-am* had pillars in green denoting cypress trees. The top portion of the pillars had red elements, supporting painted ceilings. The implication for the introduction of the pillars in the wooden halls cannot be stated with certainty. Some scholarly work show that the purpose of borrowing similar elements of structures of Persepolis was to assert the status of perfect rulers in the Islamic world as

[286] In Hinduism it is believed that the eastern direction is guarded by Indra (god of heaven). Suresh Chandra, *Encyclopedia of Hindu Gods and Goddesses*, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, Ist ed. 1998, 2nd ed. 2001, p. 107.
[287] Tavernier, p. 80.
[288] *Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan, An Abridged History of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan*, eds. W. E. Begley & Z. A. Desai, Compiled by his Royal Librarian, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1990, p. 25.

done earlier by the ancient rulers of Persia.[289] But this architectural scheme may have been based on a hypostyle mosque through the means of which 'the *jharoka* took the place of the *mihrab* in the wider central nave'[290] in order to accentuate the public appearance of Shahjahan in the *darbar* by depicting the Mughal Emperor as the *qibla*, the direction of the Kaaba at Mecca, of those assembled at his court. It is fascinating to note that once Shah Jahan founded his new imperial capital city[291] and commissioned a royal palace there which was considered as the centre of the Universe, many striking structures in the palace complex were erected but built no palace of worship here. The Jama Masjid he had constructed was placed outside the palace walls. It was during the reign of Aurangzeb that within the palace complex a small mosque called Moti Masjid was added.

The *diwan-i-am* could not be approached plainly without any court formalities. Those who were permitted to enter the *darbar* hall had to first pass through the *nakarkhana*. This was a pavilion for kettle-drums, trumpets and other musical instruments as part of the royal orchestra. It was situated away from the royal apartments so that the music played there at particular hours of the day and night not disturbed the Emperor when he was taking rest.[292]

The *diwan-i-am* is built in many imperial capital-cities. Shah Jahan founded Shahjahanabad in 1638 and shifted the imperial capital from Agra to the city. The fort built here has been regarded as one of the great masterpieces of mediaeval Muslim art.[293] The *diwan-i-am* here is exemplary owing to some of the exquisite features it exhibited. Bernier observed that the ceiling of the *diwan-i-am* at Shahjahanabad was painted and inlaid with gold. The hall has no wall on three sides but only on one side which acts as a divider between the public space and the private space. In the centre of the wall is a

[289] Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*, Bookwise Pvt. ltd., New Delhi, 2006, p. 67.
[290] Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World, The Padshahnama, An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library*, tr. Wheeler Thackston, Windsor Castle, Sackler Gallery, Thames and Hudson, p. 135.
[291] The reason Shah Jahan built Shahjahanabad is because the Emperor considered the streets of Agra as not wide enough to accommodate the elaborate royal procession. Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, p. 196.
[292] Bernier, p. 260.
[293] Jan Morris, *Heaven's Command, An Imperial Progress*, vol. I of the Pax Britannica Trilogy, Faber and Faber, 1973, p. 2.

canopied niche, made of marble. The niche houses an elevated structure where the throne was kept which was about 10 feet high from the ground.[294] The Emperor would enter the hall through a large window. Under the elevated structure, the immediate space which was exclusively reserved for the high-ranking nobles was surrounded by a silver railing. Beyond the silver railing the space was marked for the mansabdars or the low-ranking nobles. Bernier calls this audience hall as 'Am-kas or audience-chamber of high and low' because it was here that the king would give audience 'indiscriminately to all his subjects'.[295] Emperor Jahangir in his memoirs had recorded the division of space within the hall in the following words:

> In the public audience hall there were two railings (*mahjar*) of wood. Inside the first, Amirs, ambassadors, and people of honour sat, no one entered this circle without an order. Within the second railing, which is broader than the first, the mansabdars of inferior rank, ahadis, and those who had work to do are admitted. Outside this railing stand the servants of the Amirs and all the people who may enter the Diwankhana. As there was no difference between the first and second railings, it occurred to me that I should decorate the first with silver. I ordered this railing and the staircase that led from this railing to the balcony of the Jharokha, as well as the two elephants placed on the two sides of the seat of the Jharokha, which skilful people had made of wood, to be decorated with silver. After this was completed it was reported to me that 125 maunds of silver in Hindustani weight, equal to 880 maunds of Persia, had been used up; instead, it now assumed a worthy appearance.[296]

The above description of the architectural arrangement of the *diawan-i-am* by Jahangir is crucial. The Mughals had a very stratified court society and the execution of architectural buildings and their elements were representative of imperial ideology. The imperial decision that the first wooden railing of the court to be inlaid with silver and thus, introducing an outward change in the material used shows the clear intention of the Mughal Emperors employed architecture as demarcator and not just for technical purpose. Here, the demarcation brought via the use of a different kind of material is

[294] Bishop Heber, p. 233.
[295] Bernier, p. 261.
[296] Tuzuk, vol. I, p. 242.

critically associated with the imperial design of bringing 'difference between the first and second railings' because the hierarchy in space denoted hierarchy of men which was very crucial for the functioning of the court culture.

Coming to the baldachin or canopy in the audience hall, it is covered by a 'Bengal' roof and it shielded the imperial throne. The back wall of the baldachin contains panels of beautiful inlay work or *pietra dura* representing flowers and birds. The panels also contain the image of Orpheus, playing a flute amidst beasts. Many European visitors to the hall had noticed the figure and recorded its presence in their accounts. Bishop Heber who visited the structure in the 19th century based on the picture of Orpheus, concluded that the work was rendered by an 'Italian or at least European artist'.[297] After the revolt of 1857, the panels were removed from the *darbar* and transported and kept in the South Kensington Museum. Later during the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, they were brought back to their original place.[298]

The *Diwan-i-am* in the Red fort at Shahjahanabad was infused with symbols of justice borrowed from various sources. The pillared hall was meant to appear like the court of Solomon.[299] The back wall of the royal throne includes inlaid panels; one of them shows the picture of Orpheus[300], another popular symbol of justice borrowed from the Greek mythology. The manuscript, *Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi* states that the figure of Orpheus in the *diwan-i-am* is 'certainly taken from the design by the celebrated Raphael…'[301]

> the *Durbar*, which is the Place wher the Mogull sitts out daylie, to entertayne strangers, to receiue petitions and presents, to giue Commandes, to see, and to bee seene … The Place is a great Court, whither resort all sorts of people. The king sits in a little Gallery ouer head; Ambassidors, the great men and strangers

[297] Bishop Heber, p. 234.
[298] Sir Henry Sharp, *Delhi, Its Story and Buildings*, Oxford University Press, London, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, 1928 (2nd Edition), p. 87.
[299] Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, p. 200.
[300] As per the Greek mythology, Orpheus was the musician prince from Greece who was gifted a lyre by Apollo, a Greek god. He was so skilled in singing and in playing the gifted lyre that after listening to it even quarrelling gods were pacified. See Paule Du Bouchet and Fabian Negrin, *Prince Orpheus*, Getty Publications, California, 2003, pp. 6-8.
[301] *Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi*.

> of quality within the inmost rayle vnder him, raysed from the ground, Couered with Canopyes of veluet and silke, vnder foote layd with good Carpetts; the Meaner men representing gentry within the forst rayle, the people without in a base Court, but soe that all may see the king. This sitting out hath soe much affinitye with a Theatre— the manner of the king in his gallery; The great men lifted on a stage as actors; the vulgar below gazing on…[302]

When Lady Nugent, the wife of commander-in-chief of the British forces in India, George Nugent paid her visit to the Mughal palace at Delhi in the early nineteenth century, she had noticed the images of the Virgin and Child located behind the imperial throne and that of Orpheus. Unable to comprehend the relevance of such representation in the Mughal *durbar*, regarded the presence of the image of Orpheus with his fiddle as 'a strange mistake' and the inclusion of the pictures of the Virgin and Child on the mosaic in the audience hall, as 'a little stratagem of some good Catholic, to have honor paid to this, while the person intends it to be addressed to the great Mogul'.[303] Bishop Heber, another visitor who visited the palace in December 1824 during the reign of Akbar Shah II whose son Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last Mughal Emperor, found the maintenance of the structure displeasing but the architecture enthralled him. The audience hall, he described, as 'a splendid pavilion of marble'.[304]

Diwan-i-khas and Allusions to Paradise

This was reserved for discussing confidential affairs of the state. Drafting of *farmans*, inspecting architectural plans, etc. were done here. The structure receives no mention by the contemporary historians of Akbar's period. The present *diwan-i-khas* at Fathepur Sikri is a misnomer.[305] The *diwan-i-khas* at Delhi contains a dome structure while the rest of the buildings are without a dome; they are made in trabeate technique. We observe that this particular court through its architectural planning generated allusions to paradise.[306]

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[302] Roe, pp. 106.
[303] *Lady Nugent's East India Journal*, ed. Ashley L. Cohen, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 192-3.
[304] Bishop Heber, p. 234.
[305] R. Nath, *Some Aspects of Mughal Architecture*, pp. 7-21.
[306] Catherine B. Asher, *The new Cambridge History of India, Architecture of Mughal India*, Part I, vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ist pub. 1992, rep. 2001, p. 198.

Above the *diwan-i-khas*, the inscription reads, if there's a Paradise on earth, it is here, it is here and it is here. The structure also contains a representation of Scales of Justice. The image reflected the notion that the ultimate aim of rulership was the execution of divine injunctions and the enforcement of divine decrees. Along the middle of the *diwan-i-khas* flowed *Nahar-i-Bihisht* or the Stream of Paradise which entered the palace under the Shah Burj on the north and distributed continuous supply of water throughout the gardens and the interiors. Of course, the inclusion of the stream had its utility purpose. When the Red fort was built, a proper arrangement[307] for the water supply to the fort was made and the mentioned water channel passing right through the middle of the *diwan-i-khas*, rang mahal, and other residential palaces kept the structures naturally cool in summers apart from giving great aesthetic pleasure. Water brought to the city also contributed to the prosperity of the city and its people. The cultivation flourished so much that the taxes received from the surplus produce is said to be two million five hundred thousand rupees one year.[308]

The *diwan-i-khas* at Shahjahanabad is profusely ornamented with exquisite inlays of flowers made from semi-precious stones, giving the whole setting of the *darbar* a splendid effect. In fact a general ornamentation of the Mughal court architectural structures in many Mughal miniature paintings had floral motifs. In a painting dated 1635, depicting the Emperor Jahangir receiving Prince Khurram in the *Diwan-i-am* at Ajmer after his successful military campaign from Mewar in 1615, on both sides of the Emperor's throne are the dados with the illustrations of floral plants while the border of the dados has the creeper image. Even the tents of their illustrious ancestors exhibited motifs of plants and tress such as the court of Timur had the illustration of a golden tree bearing fruits of precious stones; perched on them were shown birds of enamelled gold with spread wings eating fruits.[309] Later the jewelled tree motif was seen in the court of

[307] Yamuna water was drawn from a canal built by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in the fourteenth century and brought to the fort by an innovative apparatus called *shutrgulu* (camel's neck). Pavan K. Varma, 'Shahjahanabad: The City that Once Was', ed. Khushwant Singh, *City Improbable: Writings on Delhi*, Penguin Books, Delhi, 2001, rep. 2010, p. 246.

[308] Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad, The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639-1739*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 65.

[309] *Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour at Samarcand A.D. 1403-6*, tr. Clements R. Markham etc., Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2001, p. 161.

Shah Jahan. The walls of the *Diwan-i-am* too at Shahjahanabad contain such a pattern. His Peacock Throne had a trellis pattern with the representation of birds and flowers. The Delhi *jharoka* and its niche too has a similar ornamentation. Carpets[310] had floral or vegetation motif just as we see in the case of architectural space of the court, probably done with the same motive so as to create the impression of paradise. The *darbari* paintings show the floors of *darbar* halls furnished with gorgeous carpets.

The floral or vegetation motifs found massively especially on the walls and pillars of the buildings of Shah Jahan was an attempt to create an effect of perpetual gardens, gardens of Paradise. Koch calls the palace buildings of Shah Jahan as the 'vegetabilization programme'.[311] Landscape is a combination of 'a living presence and a memory', of 'past and present'.[312] Throughout the Muslim world (southern Spain, North Africa, the Levant, Iran, Afghanistan and India) gardens were an important feature of the Islamic architecture, owing to three main reasons. It was a reminder to believers of a Paradise Garden as promised by Allah to His followers. It was also the expression of secular practice in Iran even before the advent of Islam to construct royal pleasure gardens and lastly, gardens were a source of delight in coarse and hot terrain.[313] The description of paradise and the kinds of reward awaited for the believers there as mentioned in the Quran reveals a correlation between the inhospitable and uncongenial surroundings in the Arabian Peninsula where Islam originated and the concept of paradise in the Quran. The desert eco-region of the Peninsula has sparse biodiversity and arid and difficult terrain.[314] Even in modern times, water is an extremely rare natural resource here. It lacks perennial rivers or streams or other water bodies. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest nation without

[310] Abul Fazl informs in his work that carpet weaving was a thriving trade in the times of Akbar. There were imperial *karkhanas* for the production of the carpets for the use in the royal palaces. The Emperor had appointed skilled weavers who were settled in Agra, Fatehpur and Lahore and they made such exquisite carpets that the gilim carpets of Iran and Turan 'are no more thought of'. In order to highlight the opulence of the carpets produced in the Mughal karkhanas, Fazl gives the total expenditure incurred in the making of single gilims. They were made '20 gaz 7 tassujes long, and 6 gaz 11½ tassujes broad, at a cost of 1810 rupees, which those who are skilled in the business have valued at 2715 rupees. *The Ain*, vol. I, p. 57.
[311] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, p. 56.
[312] Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes*, University of Pennsylvannia Press, Philadelphia, 2008, p. 7
[313] Jonas Lehrman, *Earthly Paradise: Garden and Courtyard in Islam*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980, p. 32.
[314] H. Stewart Edgell, *Arabian Deserts: Nature, Origin and Evolution*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2006, p. 71.

any permanent source of fresh surface water.[315] For the inhabitants of such harsh and extreme weather and topography, the rewards promised by Allah to the adherents of Islam in the Surah, Man (*Al-Insan*) of the *Quran* seem completely fitting.

> To the believers, '…He would reward them a Garden and (garments of) silk. 76:12
>
> Reclining in the (Garden) on raised couches, they will see there neither the sun's (excessive heat) nor (the moon's) excessive cold. 76:13
>
> And the shades of the (Garden) will come low over them, and the bunches (of fruit), there, will hang low, within easy reach. 76:14
>
> And amongst them will be passed round vessels of silver and goblets of crystal. 76:15
>
> And they will be given to drink there of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with Zanjabil – 76:17
>
> A fountain there, called Salsabil. 76:18[316]

Even the garments for the righteous in paradise will be in green colour. The choice of the colour, also known as the colour of Islam, is not arbitrary. The colour green symbolizes vegetation which is found not in abundance but is extremely meager in such parched regions.[317] A rare view of lush greenery and water or an oasis is surely the sight of relief and delight, the sight to behold in these areas.

> 21 Upon them will be green Garments of fine silk and heavy brocade…[318]
>
> 18:31 …and they will wear green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade…[319]

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[315] Wayne H. Bowen, *The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations, The History of Saudi Arabia*, 2nd Edition, Greenwood, California, 2015, p. 3.
[316] *The Qur'an*, p. 402.
[317] Robert L. Winzeler, *Anthropology and Religion: What We Know, Think, and Question*, 2nd Edition, Altamira Press, Plymouth, 2012, p. 91.
[318] *The Qur'an*, p. 402.

> For the non-adherents or those who deflect from the path of Islam as in the case of Saba,[320] the punishment allotted to them is the ruthless climate and sparse vegetation
>
> But they turned away (from Allah), and We sent against them the Flood (released) from the Dams, and We converted their two garden (rows) into "gardens" producing bitter fruit, and tamarisks, and some few (stunted) Lote-trees. 34:16 Sheba (Saba') [321]

The early Mughal Emperors laid the foundation of imperial ideology which was further developed and expanded by the grand Mughals. The Mughals since the inception of the empire had employed the notion of paradise existing in their realm. The very first garden, the Aram Bagh, Babur had commissioned to construct outside Agra was based on the Persian model of Paradise.[322] Garden which was regarded as a metaphor for paradise was the indispensable space for the Mughals where *darbars*, imperial ceremonies, etc were conducted and even their tombs were buried in a garden. In the early phase, the *darbars* were often held in gardens while in the glorious phase when there was an eruption of a multiplicity of forts and palaces, gardens became an essential part of the architecture of the Mughal court. The effect of the presence of eternal gardens[323] was achieved through

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[319] Ibid. p. 194.
[320] The term Saba denotes to a region in Yemen and also to Saba ibn Yashjub ibn Yarub ibn Qahtan, the common progenitor to all Yemeni tribes. Hamad Subani, *The Secret History of Iran*, Version 1:1, 2013, p. 28.
[321] *The Qur'an*, p. 289.
[322] John Reeve, *The Lives of the Mughal Emperors*, British Library.
[323] Laura E. Parodi who studied the tomb of Akbar located at Sikandra in the suburb of Agra reveals that the tomb was built as an allusion to paradise and therefore, it was called Bhishtabad (Abode of Paradise). The inscriptions from the Quran and ornamentation indicate a paradisiacal connotation. In fact, the inscription on the gateway of the tomb claims that the space, where the tomb is erected, is superior than the garden of paradise and the divine throne. The inscription reads:
Hail, blessed space happier than the garden of paradise!
Hail, lofty building higher than the divine throne!
A paradise, the garden of which has thousands of Rizwans as servants,
The garden of which has thousands of paradises for its land.
The pen of the mason of the Divine Decree has written on its court
'These are the gardens of Eden, enter them to live for ever.'
Laura E. Parodi, 'Solomon, the Messenger and the Throne Themes from a Mughal Tomb', East and West, vol. 51, No. 1/ 2 (June 2001), Instituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO), p. 130.

the symbolic motifs introduced in the space of the imperial court. Their gardens in outdoors were also not deprived of such symbolisms. A chronogram composed for the Shalimar Bagh at Lahore by Shah Jahan reads: 'When Shah Jahan, the King Defender of the Faith, laid out the Shalimar in becoming style, I asked the date of the foundation from the doorkeeper of Paradise. He answered saying, 'This is the example of the highest Paradise.'[324] It appears that the Mughal notion of paradise was not in complete similitude with the one found in the *Quran*. In the *Quran*, Allah promises His followers a great reward i.e. Paradise on the impending Day of Judgment according to their deeds when the dead will be resurrected.

> Every soul shall have a taste of death: and only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have succeeded: for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception. 3:185[325]

The Mughals, on the other hand, proposed that an ideal world or paradise was very much at hand and not something yet to come as projected in the Quran. And that the time which was at hand i.e. the present represented not a moment which was ephemeral but a moment which was eternal with no beginning and no end. Perhaps it is in this context that Jafar Beg Asif khan who chronicled a part of the *Ta'rikh-i alfi* at the order of Akbar, writes 'Heaven, which is the highest gift, is another name for his epoch. In fact, it would be reasonable if this epoch should resent the name of heaven, since the latter is but a promissory note, while the former is as good as cash at hand.'[326] In the world of the

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Hence the notion was not restricted to a particular Mughal structure but it was widely applicable to gardens, halls of audience, and other residential buildings, probably indicating that the realm of the Mughals was more magnificent than that of Allah.

[324] Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia*, I. B. Tauris, London, New York, 2012, p. 83.

[325] *The Qur'an*, p. 45.

[326] Ali Anooshahr, 'Dialogism and Territoriality in a Mughal History of the Islamic Milennium', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2012, vol. 55, p. 228.

Mughals, time was not just perceived as a linear progression[327] and that 'events recur on the basis of an ideal time existing parallel to and outside of the time of history'.[328]

Royal Insignia

The Mughal court would have four essential royal insignia which were exclusively used in the court. The most important one was the *Awrang* or throne, made of precious metals like gold, silver, etc. or studded with precious stones. Sir Thomas Roe who had accompanied Jahangir to Mandu a couple of times, records that the court there was adorned with a royal throne, made of gold and precious stones like rubies, emeralds and turquoise were generously set on it.[329] Shah Jahan's court writer described the peacock throne comprising of 'a canopy supported by twelve-sided pillars and measures three and one-fourth cubits in length, two and one-half in breadth, and five in height from the flight of steps to the overhanging dome' and that it was on the eve of Shah Jahan's coronation, the Emperor had ordered that '86 lakhs worth of gems and precious stones, and one lakh *tolas* of gold worth another 14 lakhs, should be used in decorating it. Together these total one crore (100 lakhs) of rupees as money is reckoned in Hind, or 330,000 *tumans* according to the coinage of Iraq, or four crores of *khanis* in the currency of Transoxiana'.[330] According to Mufazzal Khan, the total cost for the making of the throne was nine crores nine lakhs and one thousand rupees.[331] He further informs that it took seven years for the completion of this royal insignia. Decorated with numerous precious stones, the court chronicler especially refers to a ruby which was used to adorn the throne and was worth one *lakh* rupees and that it was a gift to the reigning Emperor's royal father, Jahangir by the Persian Shah, Shah Abbas on which the names of Timur, Mirza Shahrukh, Mirza Ulugh Beg, and Shah Abbas were inscribed along with the names of the Mughal Emperors Akbar, Jahangir, and of Shah Jahan.

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[327] Monica Juneja, 'On the Margins of Utopia—One More Look at Mughal Painting', *The Medieval History Journal*, 2001, 4:203, p. 206.
[328] Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India, 1550-1750*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Newcastle, 2006, rep. 2009, p. 152.
[329] Sir Thomas Roe, p. 357.
[330] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 147.
[331] Mufazzal Khan, Tarikh-i-Mufazzali, in Sir H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India, as Told by its Historians. The Mohammadan Period*, vol. VII, London, Trubner And Co., p. 142.

Bernier mentions that the peacock throne placed in the *diwan-i-am* stood on six heavy feet. It was made of solid gold, handsomely studded with precious stones like rubies, emeralds and diamonds. Bernier who could not see the throne from a very close range and examine the water and clearness of the precious stones used excessively on the throne but on the basis of the huge collection of jewels, he estimates that the cost of the throne was 'forty millions of roupies, worth sixty millions of pounds [livres] or thereabouts'.[332] The workmanship of the throne could not impress the French traveller much barring the two peacocks which according to him was the workmanship of a Frenchman but his name is not mentioned in his account. In the words of Careri, the peacock throne 'is all over set with Diamonds, Emerauds, Rubies, Pearls and Saphires ; especially the Pearls on the twelve little Pillars, which close the three sides, are beyond all that can be imagin'd. Then the Roof of it and all other Parts is so orderly enrich'd with jewels of inestimable Value, all found within the Empire, that some make the Value of it to rise to fifty Millions, but in reality it is not to be Valu'd.'[333]

Tavernier records of seven remarkable thrones the Mughals had. One of them was completely embellished with diamonds, the others with rubies, pearls and emeralds, etc. The French gem merchant fascinated by the peacock throne gives a detailed description and observation of the precious stones used for the throne. He was struck by the grandeur of the throne which was about 6 feet in length and 4 feet in width. He expresses his amazement at the massiveness of the feet of the throne. He reports it to be worth 107,000 *lakhs* of rupees.[334] He writes:

> Upon the four feet, which are very massive, and from 20 to 25 inches high, are fixed the four bars which support the base of the throne, and upon these bars are ranged twelve columns, which sustain the canopy on three sides, that which faces the court being open. Both the feet and the bars, which are more than 18 inches long, are covered with gold inlaid and enriched with numerous diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. In the middle of each bar there is a large balsas ruby, cut en cabochon, with four emeralds round it, forming a square cross. Next in

[332] Bernier, p. 269.
[333] Thevenot & Careri, p. 246.
[334] The author of the *Tarikh-i-Mufazzali*, Mufazzal Khan gives the total cost of the peacock throne

succession, from one side to the other along the length of the bars there are similar crosses, arranged so that in one the ruby is in the middle and four balass rubies surround it. The emeralds are table-cut, and the intervals between the rubies and emeralds are covered with diamonds, the largest of which do not exceed 10 to 12 carats in weight, all showy stones, but very flat. There are also in some parts pearls set in gold, and upon one of the longer sides of the throne there are four steps to ascend it…a sword, a mace, a round shield, a bow and quiver with arrows, are suspended from this throne, and all these weapons, as also the cushions and steps, both of this throne, and of the other six, are covered over with stones which match those with which each of the thrones respectively is enriched.

I counted the large balass rubies on the great throne, and there are about 108, all cabuchons, the least of which weighs 100 carats, but there are some which weigh apparently 200 and more. As for the emeralds, there are plenty of good colour, but they have many flaws; the largest may weigh 60 carats, and the least 30 carats. I counted about 116; thus there are more emeralds than rubies.

The underside of the canopy is covered with diamonds and pearls, with a fringe of pearls all round, and above the canopy, which is a quadrangular-shaped dome, there is a peacock with elevated tail made of blue sapphires and other coloured stones, the body of gold inlaid with precious stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts, and of a somewhat yellow water. On both sides of the peacock there is a large bouquet of the same height as the bird, consisting of many kinds of flowers made of gold inlaid with precious stones. On the side of the throne opposite the court there is a jewel consisting of a diamond of from 80 to 90 carats weight, with rubies and emeralds round it, and when the Emperor is seated he has this jewel in full view. But in my opinion the most costly point about this magnificent throne is that the twelve columns supporting the canopy are surrounded with beautiful rows of pearls, which are round and of fine water, and weigh from 6 to 10 carats each. At 4 feet distance from the throne two umbrellas are fixed, on either side, the sticks of which for 7 or 8 feet in height are covered with diamonds, rubies,

> and pearls. These umbrellas are of red velvet, and embroidered and fringed all round with pearls.[335]

The other royal insignia consisted of the *Chatr* or umbrella which was too inlaid with precious jewels. To obstruct the sun rays, the attendants at the court would hold an oval-shaped object called the *Saya-ban* or *Aftabgir*. It was a yard in length and its handle was covered with brocade and decorated with precious stones, very much similar in appearance to that of the *Chatr*. And the last important insignia was the *Kawkaba*. They were placed before the assembly hall.[336]

Images and Themes: Real and Imaginary

The visual representations of the Mughal court and the paintings on the walls and panels depicting images concerning the Christian subject-matters and the Solomonic symbolisms, the motifs like lion and cow, etc. also enable us to reconstruct the court setting. Speaking of the iconography utilized to represent the court in the Mughal paintings, S. P. Verma says, 'The geometric designs composed with a hexagon, a triangle, a circle, symmetrical figures of utensils, etc., are common, but not so the snake, the dragon, the elephant and the human head. The heads of animals—wild-goat, stag, tiger, horse, sheep and a dragon (symbol of heaven)—employed in the ornamentation of the thrones, boats, arms, etc., are not merely decorative, they are symbolic.[337] To begin with the pictures adorning the walls of the *durbar* as recorded in the contemporary accounts and noticeable in several paintings, there were portrait pictures of the predecessors as well as kings from different lands,[338] pictures concerning Christian themes, etc. displayed at the imperial court. The European diplomats and Jesuit missionaries coming to the Mughal court had made some significant observations of the usage of such subject matters. The exchange of diplomatic missions, interfaith

[335] Tavernier, pp. 303-5.
[336] *The Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 52.
[337] Som Prakash Verma, *Art and Material Culture in the Paintings of Akbar's Court*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1978, p. 71
[338] Sir Thomas Roe had observed paintings of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Thomas Smiths and other personalities including the picture of the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir at the court of Mandu. Sir Thomas Roe, p. 357.

discussions, gift ceremony,[339] etc. enabled the Mughal Emperors especially Akbar[340] and Jahangir to procure a collection of paintings, images and books[341] dealing with the European themes. These procured images were valued and were also put on display at the court. In 1590 Akbar celebrated the day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary at his court where the picture of the Virgin Mary was placed and he ordered the courtiers to pay respect to the sacred picture by kissing it.[342] Jahangir is also recorded to have such images at his court.[343]

Many Europeans, who left their accounts on the Mughal court, noticed the images concerning the Christian themes at the Mughal court.[344] In 1608, Father Xavier notices that the collection of Jahangir included the pictures of Sardanapalus, the Circumcision, God the Father, Crucifixion, and David kneeling before Nathan. Jahangir had his

[339] Akbar and Jahangir were fond of receiving paintings and books with illustrations of sacred figures from the Christian world as gifts from the European ambassadors and visitors and Jesuit missionaries.

[340] Akbar accorded a cordial treatment to the Jesuits and their faith. He had given 'full liberty' to the Fathers 'to preach and make conversions'. They were permitted to take out a big procession in the city, carrying and displaying their religious symbolic objects like crucifixes and lighted candles on the demise of a Portuguese at the court. Akbar welcomed the visits of Jesuit missionaries at his court. On their third mission to Akbar from 1595-1605, Father Xavier, Father Emmanuel Pinheiro and Brother Benedict de Goes had gone to the court at Lahore. It is reported that the Emperor visited their Chapel and sat on his bended knees with hands clasped like a Christian prince while the Fathers chanted their litanies. Also, the Emperor would engage in discussions with them on the significance of certain rites they had such as the ceremony of the Emperor kissing the Pope's foot and the implication of this mode of salutation. Akbar would also issue *farmans* to permit the grand celebrations for the Christian festivals like Christmas and Easter. He wore a relinquary containing the picture of the Virgin Mary on one side while the other had the image of Agnus Dei. Sir Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and The Great Mogul*, Vintage Books, (1st pub.) 1932, (rep.) 1990, Gurgaon, pp. 33, 54-60.

[341] In 1580 Akbar received a copy of Plantyn's Polyglot Bible of 1569-1572. At Lathore in 1598, Father Xavier gifted Akbar the images of Christ and of S. Ignatius Loyola which were made in Japan. In 1601 Father Xavier presented a picture of Lady of Loretto. In 1602 Akbar was offered pictures of —'a retrato ao naural'—and of Ayres de Saldanha, the Portuguese Viceroy. The Jesuit Fathers presented Jahangir with Father Xavier's Persian book, The Mirror of Purity with the illustrations of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Ibid., pp. 70, 225-6.

[342] Ibid., p. 48.

[343] It is said that Jahangir had a fascination for the Christian faith to such an extent that it was 'almost embarrassing'. His bed-chamber had the pictures of the Virgin Mary. He wore a gold cross. Once he stood with his arms stretched out in the shape of a cross. His royal seal had the images of Christ and the Virgin. On Christmas, he attended the Church. In 1607 at Lahore he sent many candles of superior wax to the Fathers on the eve of Christmas. He had his nephews, Hoshang and Tahmuras converted to Christianity, though it was believed to be done either to procure Portuguese wives or to eliminate any claims of kingship by them. Ibid., pp. 69-73.

[344] The use of the Christian images was not limited to their court only but also used for other architectural settings. Jahangir commissioned some mural paintings with Christian themes at Sikandra where the tomb of his father is located. Manucci had also observed there the drawings of human figures and those of the Virgin Mary, a crucifix and Saint Ignatius, over which Aurangzeb ordered for the application of a coat of whitewash to hide them. As Manucci went inside the dome, he further noticed that its ceiling had the images of angels.

audience and private assembly halls at Agra, Lahore and Ajmer decorated with pictures.[345] English traveller, William Finch who in 1611 visited Lahore observes of the court, "On the right hand of King, on the wall behind him, is the picture of our Saviour; on the left, of the Virgin."[346] Pietro Della Valle while describing the square court of the Mughals at Ahmedabad, observes that on one of the walls 'stood expos'd to publick view an Image of the Virgin *Mary*, plac'd there by *Sciah Selim*, who, they say, was devoted to her, and to whom perhaps it was given by one of our Priests'[347] Thevenot writes, "There are a great many Pictures upon the Walls, which represent the Actions of the Great Moguls, their Fore-Fathers that are pompously Painted there; and on one Gate there is a Crucifix and the Picture of the Virgin on another...[348]

Besides, literary sources to establish the employment of the Christian images, Mughal paintings can also provide valuable information. Some of the portrait paintings done under Jahangir's reign for his auto-biography, the *Jahangirnama* contain iconography of immense importance. In the *Darbar of Jahnagir* painted by Manohar in about 1620, now at the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston, United States of America, a picture of the Virgin Mary to the right hand side of the Emperor is visible. Likewise the painting, *Jahangir receives Prince Khurram on his return from Mewar Campaign* done in 1615 shows that such images were put on display at the court. The inclusion of such illustrations within an illustration was quite frequent, intentional and instilled with tropes and metaphors. Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot proposed that the image of the Virgin Mary placed in the *Diwan-i-am* was an imperial mode of exalting the Mughal genealogy and that the iconography was reminiscent of a Mongol queen, Alanqua's miraculous conception through a ray of light.[349]

[345] S.P. Verma, *Jahangir an Aesthete and the Berlin Album—An Appraisal in Ernst Kuhnel and Hermann Goetz, Indian Book Painting from Jahangir's Album in the State Library in Berlin*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2013, p. 67.
[346] W. Foster, *Early Travels In India*, Reprint, New Delhi, 1968, p. 184.
[347] *The travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, vol. I, pp. 97.
[348] M. de Thevenot, *Indian travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. S. Sen, New Delhi, 1949, p. 85.
[349] Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 190-1.

Another theme which can be seen is the usage of the images of animals whether mythical, fantastical[350] or real. The use of animals (mythical, wild and meek ones) in Mughal paintings was to bring a parallel between Solomon, a son of David and a king of ancient Israel and that of the Mughal Emperor especially Shah Jahan and the comparison between the two was a favourite theme of the eulogies found in Mughal literature and art.[351] Solomon, revered as a Prophet in Islam, was also regarded as an ideal ruler in the *Quran*. It is believed that Solomon or Suleiman, who was appointed a king, had supernatural skills[352] by the grace of Allah. His court was attended by men, birds, ferocious beasts, jinns, demons, and angels in complete harmony. In the *Quran*, the Surah, Sad (38:34-40), says that Allah extremely pleased with Solomon's true devotion to Him, rewarded him in the following ways: '...We subjected the Wind to his power, to flow gently to his order, whithersoever he willed— 37 As also the Satans, (including) every kind of builder and diver— 38 As also others bound together in fetters… 40 And he enjoyed, indeed, a Near Approach to Us, and a beautiful Place of (final) Return.'[353] And thus, Allah fulfilled his wish to have a kingdom such as none after him would have. The Sura Saba' (Sheba) (34:12-13) says:

> And to Solomon (We made) the Wind (obedient): its early morning (stride) was a month's (journey), and its evening (stride) was a month's (journey); and We made a Font of molten brass to flow for him; and there were Jinns that worked in front of him, by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them turned aside from Our Command, We made him taste of the Chastisement of the Blazing Fire. 12
>
> They worked for him as he desired, (making) Arches, Images, Basons as large as Reservoirs, and (cooking) Cauldrons fixed (in their places)… 13[354]

Solomon as synonymous with the icon of an ideal rule in Islam had many kings in their respective reigning periods in the Islamic world compared with the revered Prophet King.

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[350] Annemarie Schimmel proposes that the fantastical themes in Mughal paintings were undeniably a Hindu influence. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals*, p. 282.
[351] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, p. 5.
[352] Solomon proclaimed: "O you people! We have been taught the speech of Birds, and on us has been bestowed (a little) of all things: this is indeed Grace manifest (from Allah.)" 27:16. *The Qur'an*, p. 253.
[353] *The Qur'an*, p. 308.
[354] Ibid., p. 288.

On the accession of the Delhi Sultan, Iltutmish, the author of the *Tajul Ma'athir* had addressed him as 'the inheritor of the kingdom of Solomon'.[355] Some of the buildings constructed by Akbar and Jahangir depict images of demons along with birds, angels and stars. This could be an attempt to project themselves as ideal rulers just like Solomon who was known to have powers which a normal human being does not have and was able to bring even demons under his subjugation. Jahangir had the Lahore fort decorated with the pictures of Solomon.[356] The mural paintings which can still be seen on the ceilings of the Kala Burj in the Lahore fort reminds of Solomon's retinue.[357]

Many Mughal court paintings depict an image of a ferocious lion and a meek animal sitting together peacefully. To cite a few paintings, in the painting, *The Weighing of Shah Jahan on his Forty-second Lunar Birthday* the figure of a sheep is shown between the two lions. *Shah Jahan honoring Prince Aurangzeb at Agra before his Wedding* painted by Payag in 1640 shows a lion and a cow image. *Jahangir Presents Prince Khurram with a Turban Ornament* is yet another example of the similar theme. This (the motif of a lion with a cow, sheep, goat or cub, etc.) was a popular Mughal symbolism[358] associated with

[355] Tajud din Hasan Nizami, *Tajul Ma'athir (The Crown of Glorious Deeds)*, tr. Bhagwat Swaroop, Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, Delhi, 1998, pp. 287-88.

[356] A painting from Prince Salim's collection from Allahabad, painted in 1602 from the *Diwan* of Hasan Dihlavi, titled, '*King Solomon Enthroned with Jinns, Birds and Animals*' shows Solomon enthroned and surrounded with real, magical and fantastic animals including the Persian simurgh in the sky. Simurgh in the Islamic tradition is associated with Solomonic imagery which as per Ebba Koch was used in the Mughal art to highlight that the Mughal Emperor just as Solomon was the lord of the realm that is known and also the lord of the realm that is unseen by the common man. However simurgh in the Persian tradition is also seen as the one who helped the Persian heroes, Zal and Rustam in their times of need and then also, we have a painting called, '*Flight of the Simurgh*', painted by Basawan in 1590 and the theme is taken from one of the poems by Nizami which tells about a prince who flew to a land of paradise with the help of a simurgh. So simurgh is also associated with divinity and is called the Bird of Paradise and we can say that it too represented an association between divinity and royalty and perhaps it could also be considered as a guardian assisting the reigning monarch just as it nourished and guided the feeble Zal and the wounded Rustam. Omina Okada, *Imperial Mughal Painters, Indian Miniatures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Flammorion, Paris, p. 83.

[357] Ebba Koch

[358] A similar kind of expression is also found in a Deccani painting, 'Al-Buraq', executed in 1770-75 from Hyderabad. The painting was a part of an exhibition, entitled 'Nauras: The Many Arts of the Deccan' at the National Museum, New Delhi from 27 January to 20 March 2015. It depicts a fantastical composite creature, Buraq[358] in such a way that the whole physical space occupied by the figure exhibits a number of ferocious and wild as well as small and docile animals, giving an impression that the weak ones are being devoured by those who are powerful. However the space at the centre of the composite form is acquired prominently by an elephant (a native animal of India and also a symbol of royalty) that is illustrated tenderly and effortlessly sheltering through his tusk a terrified deer. The manner in which the elephant-deer motif is used here reminds us of the Mughal lion-cow motif.

the notions of ideal rulership and perfect peace, harmony and justice. The association between the iconography and the concept of perfect social order among inter-species was reflected in a very popular painting done by Sultan Muhammad for the *Shah Nama,* the great Iranian epic, commissioned by the Persian ruler, Shah Tahmasp in the 16th c.[359] It shows the court of Gayumars, the legendary first ruler of Iran was attended by humans and beasts peacefully.[360] The cattle and diverse beasts of prey grew tame before him. In the Buddhist traditions too, the Buddha is believed to have tamed a mad elephant, Nalagiri, sent by his cousin, Devadatta in order to kill him.[361] Jahangir and Shah Jahan had tamed lions at the court. The throne of Jahangir had the figure of winged lions.

Hence through the hierarchical grading of materials, forms and colour, hierarchical ordering of architecture and a gradation of sacredness were attained and promoted in order to communicate the Mughal notions of sovereignty. However the Mughal court was not restricted to any definite architectural space and setting. It could be held in palaces, in gardens, or in camps. The Mughals were meticulous not to assign a particular space as their everlasting symbol of power. In the subsequent chapter, we will see how the Mughal court rituals made space sacred and gave meanings to the place where they were observed and to the people who performed them, that how they (rituals and space) were integrated to form meanings and ideologies and what impact they had on the shaping of the political identity of the Mughal Emperor within the buildings where the rituals were performed and how the permeability of rituals became possible beyond their designated space.

[359] Richard Foltz, *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present*, Oneworld Publications, 2013, London, p. 69.
[360] Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardener's Art through the Ages: Non-Western Perspectives*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010, Boston, p. 139.
[361] Museums in India, e.g. the Amravati State Museum at Chennai in Tamil Nadu, etc. have sculptural images depicting the subjugation of Nalagiri by the Buddha.

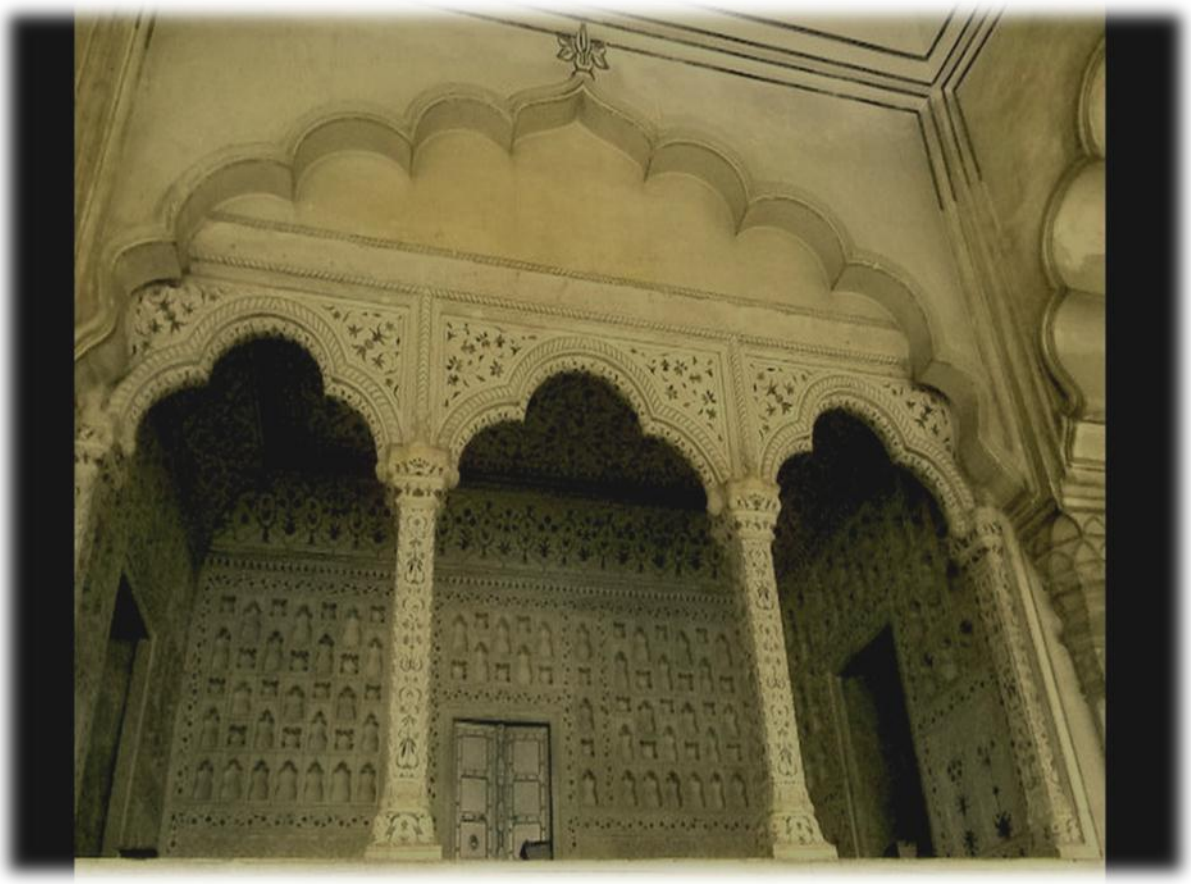

Figure 2.1

Daulat Khana-i-Khass-o-'Amm (Hall of Public Audience), Akbarabad Fort

Figure 2.2

Diwan-i-Am, Red Fort, New Delhi

Figure 2.3

An Image of Scales of Justice, *Diwan-i-khas*, Red Fort, New Delhi

Figure 2.4

Marble dados at *diwan-i-khas* with delicate floral motif inlaid with semi-precious stones
Red Fort, New Delhi

Figure 2.5

Diwan-i-khas or Hall of Private Audience with red *shamianas*, Red Fort
Painted by Ghulam 'Ali Khan, 1817
Exhibition: 'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library', 22 November-31 December 2013
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi

Figure 2.6

Pictures of the *Diwan-i-khas* from an album, *Reminiscences of Imperial Dehlie, addressed to the Governor General's Agent at Dehlie, February 1843*
'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library'
IGNCA, New Delhi

CHAPTER III

> Most Europeans imagine that the grandeur of kings and princes in other parts of the world cannot compare with what is found at the courts of their sovereigns. Excluding the principal ones- those of the Emperor, the king of France, and the king of Spain- nowhere else can be found, as they think, those airs of grandeur and of majesty which follow in a sovereign's train. But, without speaking of the Emperor of China's court which according to the accounts we have, is extremely splendid n majestuous, I assert that in the Mogul kingdom the nobles, and above all the king, live with such ostentation that the most sumptuous of European courts cannot compare in richness and magnificence with the lustre beheld in the Indian court.[362]

The splendour of the court of the Mughals was unmistakable. The foreign travellers coming to the Mughal court were instantly charmed by its grandeur and extravagance. Niccolao Manucci who was an Italian traveller and in the service of Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shahjahan and the heir-apparent, was so greatly amazed by the magnificence of the Mughal court that he could not resist to express his wonder in the above mentioned lines.

Coercive power cannot be an effectual tool to rule and control for a longer duration unless it had acquired the consent of others. The Mughal Emperor's court was 'a metaphor of a special world view' that exuded power, pomp, splendour and sophistication.[363] Such an ambience of power and spectacle was created by the Emperor via rituals and ceremonies performed at the court, thus employing the court as a political resource and transforming the two viz., the court and kingship into sacred entities. Once the association between divinity and royalty was established by the means of rituals and ceremonies at the court, the ambience of the court was further re-created even in the absence of the architectural space of the court by the means of the observance of court rituals. Therefore, even in the nonappearance of the person of the Emperor and the

[362] Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor*, tr. W. Irvine, vol. II, New Delhi, 1907, rep. 1981, p. 308.
[363] Sisir Kumar Das, *A History of Indian Literature, 500-1399, from the Courtly to the Popular*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2005, p. 299.

architectural space of the court, with the aid of the royal ceremonial objects and court rituals, obedience and loyalty from the Emperor's men were evoked.

The pomp and splendour of the Mughal court was admired not only by the contemporary court visitors, but even years after the twilight of the Empire, the legend of their court evoked a sense of appreciation from men of artistic talent. A British painter, Val C. Prinsep, who had painted a colossal painting of the Delhi Durbar, and presented it to Queen Victoria on the occasion of the assumption of the title of Empress of India, remarked on the Mughal court, "And no wonder, I should say ! Who would not wish to live at an Eastern Emperor's[364] Court?"[365]

Not only the appearance of the court and the Emperor was splendid but also the ambience of the Mughal court in its mature phase was highly formal. Even the admired contemporary courts of the Persians were not as ceremonial as that of the Mughals. Manucci narrates an incidence wherein at the Persian court of Shah Abbas,[366] the English ambassador overtly flouted the set protocols of the court in the presence of the Persian grandees.[367]

The holding of the royal court at an imperial metropolis was of immense significance. The court was the locus of multiple activities where appointments, promotions, exchange of gifts, issuing of new *farmans*, punishments to offenders, hearing of petitions, reception of ambassadors and dispatching of expeditions were done. It aided the Emperor in fostering a relationship with other participants at the court (the princes, nobles and the common people) for it was here that he socialized with them on a daily basis. It was a platform for demonstrating the Empire's might, wealth and grandeur, a medium for self-glorification. The court was an arena where all the activities were ritualised and had

[364] By an Eastern Emperor the painter meant to refer to Jahangir's court.
[365] Val C. Princep, Glimpses of Imperial India, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1878, p. 222.
[366]Shah Abbas I was a contemporary of the Mughal Emperors, Akbar and Jahangir while the reign of Shah Abbas II was in parallel to Shahjahan and Aurangzeb.
[367]Manucci records the audacity of the English ambassador at the Persian court, that he left the court without performing any salutation to the *Shah* and other such court protocols. This intensity of the defiance was so high that the terrified Manucci who was too present there as a companion to the English ambassador thought that they would be killed by the King's men for it. See *A Pepys of Mogul India 1653-1708 Being an Abridged Edition of the "Storia Do Mogor" of Niccolao Manucci*, tr. William Irvine, Low Price Publication, Delhi, rep. 1913, pp. 20-1.

symbolic interpretation to them that gave such activity critical importance. The nobles in the imperial court had to abide by the court norms and comportment. The slightest deviation from the accepted norms could result in the offender's fall from imperial favour. Therefore, the daily court rituals were also a means of disciplining the nobles. The court aided in creating dependents of the Empire. In a nutshell, the court was the centre of several impertinent activities of the Empire.

It was here at the court that the Emperor established and maintained hierarchy of the participants through specific codes of behaviour, gestures and speech, court etiquette, rituals, ceremonials and other such possible means. The ceremonials and rituals are a formal occasion wherein a series of acts are executed. The Mughal ceremonial comprised of *jharokha darshan*, daily activities held at the *durbar* (*diwan-i-am* and *diwan-i-khas*), salutations, seating arrangements, *tuladan*, *tika* ceremony and gift-giving. These demonstrated the permanence and grandeur of the empire on the senses of the spectators far more effectively than other textual forms of proclamations. In the interaction between the Mughal Emperor and his nobles and subjects, ceremonial played a prominent part. They constantly reminded his nobles and subjects that they were the Mughal Emperor's inferiors. Therefore, the study of these distinctive acts is significant in order to understand their symbolic meaning, their utilization by the Emperor to legitimate his rule, to elevate his position before the eyes of the nobles and his subjects for the success of the Empire.

The Mughal court ceremonials and rituals had a long lineage behind it. Many of them were of Persian influence like *sijda*, *paibos*, and *Navroz*[368]. They also had Turko-Mongol origin (*Shahnashin*). Some were a part of the innovations introduced by the Emperor (*taslim* and *kornish*)[369] while others were borrowed from the Rajput concept of kingship viz. *tuladan*, *jharoka-darshan* and also some Hindu festivals like *dashehra*, *rakhi*, *diwali*, etc.

In the formative years, we hear of a limited number of rituals and ceremonials as there was no proper court and therefore, holding of the court was not a daily affair of the

[368]*Navroz* was introduced by Akbar in 1582 and weighing ceremony in 1565.
[369]*Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 321.

Emperor; the court was held at irregular intervals in matters of an important issue. The early Emperors were engaged in the process of conquest and consolidation. This shows that for the proper application and utilization of rituals and ceremonials, a proper settled location was compulsory in order to magnify the outcome of an occasion for enacting certain rituals and ceremonials. It was from Akbar's period that many of the Mughal rituals and ceremonials took shape. Jahangir and Shahjahan brought some changes to them while Aurangzeb's reign saw major mutations in them.

The rituals and protocols at the court were more a reflection of the disposition of the reigning monarch, though the rudiments stayed unalterable. The central tenets of the courtly culture were not disparate. The beneficiaries of the imperial favour were the ones whose demeanour was agreeable to the Emperor. In contrast, those who in any way attempted to show a discrepancy in undertaking the commands of the Emperor were liable to chastisement. The temperament of the reigning Emperor played a vital role in the observance of a particular ritual and ceremonial. If the Emperor was liberal in character, the tolerant attitude in other fields was noticeable too.[370] The condition of the Empire was another area of concern for it impacted profoundly on the actions taken by the Emperor. Babur and Humayun were incessantly gripped by empire-making process and therefore, were not in a state to introduce well-defined protocols.

The court under Babur and Humayun was not institutionalised. The holding of the court or *darbar*, attended by all the princes and the members of the aristocracy, was not a customary phenomenon in the premature segment of the Mughal Empire. The court was held at irregular intervals in matters of a grave concern. Babur called all his courtiers when an attempt on his life was unveiled. Humayun did so in order to decide the fate of his rebellious half-brother, Prince Hindal who was pardoned at the request of his another

[370]Bernier tells us that as per the Jesuits at the court of Jahangir, he yearned to bring a massive change in the way the Mughal courtiers dressed themselves up. He was very much fascinated by European style of dressing and ordered for the making of European costumes for his courtiers and for him as well. Once they were tailored, out of sheer curiosity, he donned the European attire and immediately called one of his umara to know his opinion on the matter. But the umara was so thoroughly horror-struck at the sight of it that 'Jehan-Guyre abandoned his design and affected to pass the whole affair as a joke.' Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 1656-68, tr. Irving Brock, New Delhi, 1891, pp. 287-88.

half-brother, Prince Kamran.[371] Humayun held a public court at the Stone Palace in the garden of the late Emperor Babur, 'at which were present all the Princes and Nobles.'[372]

The protocols in the times of Babur were not rigid and were still in the process of formulation just as the Mughal empire. There was no attempt to gloss over the Emperor's inadequacies. One of the illustrations from the Baburnama, painted in 1598 A.D., now at the National Museum at New Delhi shows the fall of Babur from his horse.[373] The incident is mentioned by the Emperor himself in his memoir. Babur was least concerned with splendour and pomp and the accretion of precious jewels and wealth.[374] He was more absorbed by the notion of conquest of a territory and asserting his regal influence on it. Since the time of the accidental death of his father, Umar Shaykh Mirza, who ruled over the province of *Fargana* in Transoxiana[375] and the loss of his kingdom[376], he was terribly on the look-out for the re-conquest of his kingdom. However, in the attempt he was further shoved away from his ancestral land; thus, leaving him no alternative other than retreating from there and moving towards Kabul and finally, to Hindustan where he commenced a fresh eon in the medieval Indian history.

Humayun like his father was busy in his struggle against Sher Shah Suri and after his defeat by the Afghan king, he had to take a refuge in Persia. The protocols were uncertain at this time. When Sher Khan had sent his ambassador to Humayun, the Mughal Emperor consulted with his friends, where and how he should receive the ambassador, at length he gave orders that the interview should take place in the garden of the Prince Kamran and

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[371]Jouhar, *Tezkerem al vakiat or private memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, pp. 19-20.
[372]*Ibid*., p. 19.
[373] Mughal Miniatures, Texts and Notes by Rai Krishnadasa, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1955, Plate 3.
[374]When the Prince Humayun had presented the *Koh-i-nur*, procured from the Rani of Gwalior, who after the fall of her territory, had surrendered the celebrated diamond to Humayun 'as the price of family honour…', he allowed him to keep it. Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun Nama*, p. 14.
This was the same diamond which the exiled Humayun had offered it to Shah Tahmasp of Persia as a gift from his side when he met him there.
The Mughal Emperor, Shahjahan was very fond of expensive jewels and had a massive collection of them. When Aurangzeb asked for some of his precious stones which he wished to place on his throne on the day of his second coronation, the infuriated father strictly warned not to ask for them again or else he would pound them under a hammer.
[375]It lies in present Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. See *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston p. 2, for the map of Transoxiana.
[376]Just after the demise of his father, Babur was dreadfully troubled by his uncles, Sultan Ahmad Mirza, the *padishah* of Samarkand, and Sultan-Mahmud Khan, the khan of *Moghulistan*; the two formed an alliance against the minor child of twelve years. Ibid., p.1.

that all the chief residents of the city should be present at the ceremony.[377] This implies that the general outline for the reception of the ambassadors at the court was not well laid out. They were highly flexible and frequently subjected to changes as per the wish of the Emperor and expediency of the time.

Besides, Humayun was constantly troubled by the rebels of his half-brothers. Therefore, during the phase of his attempt to recover his lost territory, he had no time to enforce strict and rigid rules and regulations. There were frequent occurrences of improper behaviour of the Emperor's men, especially of his brothers who rebelled against Humayun many a time. When Dildar Begum, the mother of the Prince Hindal who was Humayun half-brother, gave a grand entertainment, at which all ladies of the court were present; amongst these was the daughter of the Prince's preceptor, Hamida Banu Begum. Humayun was charmed by her beauty and inquired if she was betrothed. He was told that she had been asked but the proper ceremony was yet to occur. Humayun expressed his wish to marry her. This enraged Hindal who replied, "I thought you came here to do me honour, not to look out for a young bride: if you commit this (ridiculous) action, I will leave you." The insolent manner of her son, sadden Dildar Begum and admonishing him, said, "You are speaking very improperly to his Majesty, whom you ought to consider as the representative of your late father." But Hindal was not in the mood to apologize for his inappropriate demeanour which annoyed the Emperor who went away from there. Though Dildar Begum persuaded him to come back to the place and the next day she gave a nuptial banquet.[378] In another time, Humayun entrusted the task of carrying water for him on Jouhar, strictly warning him not to let anyone else offer him water to drink without Jouhar's seal being affixed along with several other instructions. But the next day Jouhar returned the water bottle to the former water-carrier, Herbay[379] on his demand. Seeing this, Humayun severely reprimanded Jouhar for his failure to execute his allocated chore.[380]

[377]Jouhar, *Tezkerem al vakiat or private memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, p. 26.
[378]*Ibid*., pp. 30-31.
[379]Formerly it was Herbay who was assigned the task of carrying water for the Emperor but since he wished to go to Lahore to see his relatives, Humayun transferred the task to Jouhar permanently. *Ibid*., p. 111.
[380]*Ibid*., pp.111-112.

It was only when Humayun succeeded in recovering his lost dominion that he by and by attempted to enforce a series of protocols for his men. Khwand Amir, the author of *Humayun Nama*, tells us about the innovations introduced by Humayun at his court. The Emperor, Humayun would first enter the court and sit himself on the throne while the drum was beaten as an indicator for the nobles standing outside to come inside the court instantly. On nearing the end of the session, Humayun would rise from the throne and leave the court. The gunners at this point fired guns which signalised the nobles to exit the court.[381]

Humayun started awarding his men at the court. The keepers of the wardrobe used to bring the suits of fine apparel and the treasurers, several bags of money, so that whenever Humayun wished to reward someone with robes and money, he would be immediately provided by it.[382] He also classified the men at his service into three classes and they were: the *Ahl-i-Daulat* who were the officers of the state, *Ahl-Saadat* (theologians) were good men, while *Ahl-i-Murad* were people of pleasure (singers, dancers, poets and musicians).[383] Humayun appointed each day to one of the three classes. Mondays and Wednesdays were designated as days of pleasure (parties), and on these some days some of the old companions and chosen friends and parties of people pleasure and distinction were invited to the court. The days were spent in listening to songs and enchanting music.[384] He had three arrows of gold and each of these arrows was handed over to one of the leaders of the three classes so that through his agency the affairs of that class could be maintained.[385]

With the motive to mark his coronation as an important event, Humayun started celebrating the anniversary of his coronation and made it a great festive day, celebrated with great preparations and ostentations. He made arrangements for tournaments for striking gourds and archery and such other amusements. He made it an occasion too to distribute gifts and rewards to the men belonging to the three classes.[386] Gulbadan Banu

[381]Khwand Amir, *Humayun Nama*, tr. Baini Prashad, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940, p. 27.
[382]*Ibid.*
[383]*Ibid.*, p. 26.
[384]*Ibid.*, pp. 27-8.
[385]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[386]*Ibid.*, p. 63.

Begum, the half-sister of Humayun gives an account of this feast after Humayun returned from Chunar.

Another occasion of felicitation recorded by Khwand Amir was the marriage of Hindal Mirza. When Hindal Mirza was married, on the account of this, a great celebration was organised. Some courageous and skilled soldiers in a moment through their arrows pierced the golden and silver gourds into fragments. Pleased by their performance, the king rewarded the archers with horses and robes of honour. After this he went to the large hall of public audience and after having said his prayers he sat on the throne and sent for to his presence the men of three classes. When they entered, they offered gifts to the Emperor and stood in their place. Humayun divided the entire amount of this cash into three shares and gave to the three classes of men.[387] Then there were other men who were rewarded like the physician, Maulana Yusufi, who presented a *Qasidah* to the king and robes of honour were too presented. Babur too refers to giving out robes of honour to his men on important days. At one place he writes in his memoirs that he gave one tunic and one belt which he had worn himself to two princes, Mirza Tabrizi and Mirza Beg Taghayi along with ten thousand *shahrukhis* as congratulatory gifts for Kamran's marriage and the birth of Humayun's son.[388]

Humayun had stopped the celebration of the old *Nauroz* as the latter day was observed by the Magi or fire-worshippers kings who belonged to the *Sassanian* dynasty of Khwand Mirza says that since 'the followers of the holy religion regarded it as objectionable', therefore, its observation was forbidden.[389] Jauhar speaks about a particular mode of salutation during Humayun's times which involved the act of kissing the Emperor's feet. This was performed by his half-brother, Hindal and a few other men to Humayun.[390]

After the premature phase of the Empire, the ceremonials and rituals at the court of Akbar attained a forceful and cosmopolitan character. The need of Akbar's time was to bring political stability, to centralize all power directly under his authority, to legitimize his rule, and set up Mughal military dominance. Indeed, his re-imagining of court practices

[387]*Ibid*., p. 68
[388]*Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, pp. 432-33.
[389]Khwand Amir, *Humayun Nama*, p. 69
[390]Jouhar, *Tezkerem al vakiat or private memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, p. 28.

and implementing many regulations and innovations should be viewed as tools serving the larger objective of legitimizing the new Mughal sovereign in the eyes of all of his subjects, including the Hindus who were in majority. And therefore, many of the Hindu practices and rituals were incorporated. From Jahangir's period formation of the Empire was already achieved. The military expansion he undertook personally was fewer. His life spent more in *darbars* (court) and in indulging in various forms of royal amusements. He was especially fond of hunting and his memoir is full of hunting expeditions.

Shah Jahan was the Mughal Emperor who was more fascinated by the concept of beauty and glamour. His reign replaced the robustness of his grandfather. His court saw the adoption of unprecedented beautification. The famed peacock throne studded with precious stones was one such specimen of his beautifying process. The construction of *chihil sutun* at *Diwan-i-am* for the assembled courtiers in order to protect them from the rain, storm, excessive heat of the day, and the abolition of *sijda* (the highest form of prostration which required the performer to totally submit himself to the Emperor) reflected the change in the attitude of the reining Emperor from the former ones. The changing character in the observation of rituals and ceremonials highlighted the fact that they were now less assertive especially the aggressiveness of Akbar's time was fading and by Aurangzeb's period, rituals were outer concerns of a monarch. The royal prerogatives like hunt for Aurangzeb were something to be indulged into only after the completion of a monarch's administrative duties. Aurangzeb was more concerned with the rigid application of protocols and the efficient performance of his officials. However, his act of doing away with a large number of traditional Mughal rituals along with his highly ambitious territorial expansion of the Empire yielded not a satisfying outcome. The Persian accounts of his time tell us the cases of many officials either disobeyed the royal orders or left the imperial service which implied that the earlier concept of pride and honour associated with the imperial service was waning by and by. Perhaps Aurangzeb failed to understand the real vitality of traditional rituals and ceremonials.

Ceremonies and Festivities

Abul Fazl, giving the reason for observing celebrations, writes:

He bestows his fostering care upon men of various classes, and seeks for occasions to make presents.[391]

The rituals and ceremonials had several dynamics attached to it and they were not only effective tools at the hands of the Emperor to discipline his men and secure their services and faithfulness but were also instrumental in projecting a public image of his. Ceremonies like *tuladan* on the Emperor's lunar and solar birthdays, *jharoka-darshan*, etc. helped the Emperor in projecting himself as a benevolent Emperor who was charitable and just. And of course, they expressed the splendor and richness of the Empire. The Mughal ceremonials and etiquette comprised of *Jharoka-darshan*[392] (appearing of the Emperor at the balcony before his subjects), *tika-ceremony* (the marking of *tilaka* on the forehead of a defeated Hindu Raja by the Mughal Emperor), *tuladan* (auspiciuos weighing of the King and the princes against gold, silver and other metals, silk and other clothes, perfumes, ghee, grains and other articles on birthdays, both according to Solar and Lunar calendars), daily activities of the Emperor, court-festivals, modes of salutations and behaviour, speech and gift exchange. Akbar introduced some old Persian and Indian festivals, such as *Jashn-i-Nauroz* (New year's day) in 1582 and the Hindu ceremony of *tuladan* in 1565.

The most important of all was perhaps the coronation. The Mughal Emperors are said to have spent enormous amount of money on ceremonies and royal paraphernalia, expressing kingship. Shah Jahan had spent 1 ½ *crore* rupees on his coronation and 7 *crore* 10 lakhs on his *takht-i-taus* (peacock throne). Shah Jahan whose annual income was 23 *crore* rupees, would spend 1½ *crore* on his birthday celebrations.[393] If the time for the coronation was found to be inappropriate, he would have a second coronation after an appropriate hour was fixed for the occasion. Shah Jahan had two coronations because the time when the first coronation was held was not as auspicious as the one later chosen by the 'clear-sighted astrologers'.[394] Or if the coronation was performed in haste, it certainly called for a second coronation as we get to see in the case of Aurangzeb's

[391] *Ibid*., p. 286.
[392] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 165.
[393] Gyanendra Jain, *Kavi Banarsidas ki Aatmakatha (1586-1643 A.D)*, Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, Varanasi, 2006, p. 38.
[394] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 26.

coronations. In the second year of his reign on 12 June 1659,[395] Aurangzeb celebrated his second coronation as the first one was done in a rush and therefore all the formalities of the celebration could not be observed.[396]

In another royal account, the second coronation of Aurangzeb is described as the one 'attended with all possible magnificence of pomp and display'. The Emperor entered the Forty-Pillared Hall of Public Audience with great ceremony and ascended the fabulous Jewelled Throne constructed by his father ; whereupon he again proclaimed himself Emperor of Hindustan…'[397] Clearly since the first coronation of Aurangzeb could not be performed with much fanfare and celebrations and therefore it was not a grand royal affair. Coronation, the very first royal ceremony which had the ability to transform a prince into an Emperor was on no account a trifle matter.

Tuladan was another very important event celebrated with a huge fanfare. Careri calls the Emperor's birthday and *tuladan* as the two major festivals at the court.[398] The custom of weighing ceremony[399] was held twice a year on the eve of the Emperor's solar and lunar birthdays.[400] On his solar birthday, the weighing occurred twelve times against the precious items: first against gold, and eleven times against several different materials. On the lunar birthday of his, the weighing was repeated eight times and this time the first round of weighing was against silver, and seven times against other stuffs. The total valuable goods weighed were in the end distributed among poor people. Jahangir and Shah Jahan too twice a year weighed themselves against gold and silver and other metals, and against all sorts of silks and cloths, and various grains, etc. once at the beginning of the solar year and once at that of the lunar as was the custom in Akbar's time. [401] This

[395] Inayat Khan in the *Shah Jahan Nama* gives a different date for the coronation ceremony of Aurangzeb, i. e. 15 June 1659. Ibid., p. 558.
[396] Anees Jahan Syed, *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, Somaya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, New Delhi, 1977, p. 132.
[397] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 558.
[398] Thevenot & Careri, p. 245.
[399]The Mughal court chroniclers did not use the term '*tuladan'* for the weighing ceremony of their Emperor. Abul Fazl nowhere writes about it being borrowed from the Hindu custom and also refrains from using this Hindu word. Inayat Khan uses the expression *'jashn-i-wazn'*.
[400]Jahangir and Inayat Khan mention that the weighing ceremony was introduced by Akbar. But it was already prevalent as a royal custom among the Rajput Rajas. Akbar borrowed from them.
[401]*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 78.

was one Hindu custom which was continued even by Aurangzeb, though the weighing was held once a year on his solar birthday.[402]

The weighing ceremony of princes were organised too.[403] The princes were weighed on their two birthdays (lunar and solar) and so there was lunar weighing and solar weighing ceremonies. Aurangzeb at the time of his lunar birthday when he was turned fifteen he was weighed against gold. The ceremony was celebrated with great rejoicings. He also received many gifts from the Emperor, Shah Jahan.[404] And just as the Emperor was weighed twelve times, the royal princes were also weighed a similar number of times.[405] Besides, this was the only one Hindu custom which Aurangzeb retained. In a letter to his grandson, Muhammad Bidar Bakhta who was the eldest son of Sultan Muhammad A'azam Shah Bahadur, he wrote that though it was not the custom of the land of his ancestors, yet 'many needy and poor persons are benefitted by this practice'[406] for the weighed gold and silver and other such valuable commodities were distributed among the poor. Aurangzeb also believed that *tuladan* aided in maintaining physical well-being and it seems the said grandson was not keeping well during the time he wrote this letter to him and hence he gave a series of instructions to him (Bahadur) to get rid of his illness. One of the instructions included the weighing of his body:[407]

> ...for removing physical diseases and avoiding dangers you should continue the morning prayer which is accepted by God. All erudite and learned persons unanimously agree that to blow on water by reciting *'Surat-i-Ilkhalas'*[408] and *'Surat-i-Shafa'a'*[409] and then to drink that water is the great and immediate cure (of diseases). Though to weigh the entire body of a person against gold, silver, copper, corn, oil and other commodities is not the practice... If this light of my

[402]Saqi Mustaid Khan records the termination of weighing ceremony from the eleventh year of Aurangzeb's reign.
[403]It was during the performance of one such ceremony that Jahangir had for the first time offered wine to his 24 years old son, Shah Jahan. Jahangir started drinking wine when he was 15 years old. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 306-5.
[404]*Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 96.
[405]Prince Parvaiz, one of the sons of Jahangir, on his solar weighing ceremony was weighed twelve times. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 81.
[406]*Ruqa'at-i-Alamgiri* or *Letters of Aurangzebe*, tr. Jamshid H. Bilimoria, B.A, Idarah-i-Adabiyat -i-Delli, Delhi, 1972, p. 78.
[407]*Ibid*., pp. 78-9.
[408]Literally 'the Chapter on Sincerity' in the *Quran*.
[409]'The Chapter on Cure' in the *Quran*.

> eyes (i.e., grandson Bahadur) will weigh his body against various commodities, which are mentioned in the letter, fourteen times a year, it will be efficacious for removing mental and physical calamities.

Of *tuladan*, Ovington notices:

> On the 5th of November, Aurangzeb was weighed... and if it's found that he has increas'd in bulk, above what he weighed the preceeding Year, this adds excess of Mirth and Joy to the Solemnity; but if he lighter in the scales, this diminishes their Triumphs, and damps their cheerful Entertainments. The Grandees and Officers of State prepare for this feats, two Months before its approach, what costly Jewels and curious Rarities they can any where meet with, which they present to the Emperour at this Ceremony; either to secure his Favour, or to ingratiate with him for a more exalted station, or Honourable Employ. The Moguls are sometimes weighed against Silver, which has been distributed to the Poor.[410]

Further, in the words of Careri,

> Some suppose it to be so call'd because the King weighs himself in a pair of Scales, to see whether he is grown Fatter, but having ask'd the question in the Camp of several credible Persons, and particularly of Christians born at *Agra* and *Dehli*, who had serv'd there many Years, they told me it was a meer Romance ; for not only *Aurenge Zeb*, but none of his Predecessors ever weigh'd themselves. 'Tis true this Festival is kept in the King's House ; but they weigh Mony, Jewels, and other Things of value presented by the great Men and Favourites, which are afterwards distributed among the Poor with great Solemnity. It is done some Days after the *Barsgant* (Emperor's birthday), either sooner, or later, as the King thinks fit.[411]

Another European, Sebastian Manrique who witnessed the weighing ceremony of Shah Jahan on 8 July 1641 too gives a detailed description about the ceremony. *Tuladan* was not necessarily celebrated at the imperial capital but wherever the Emperor was. Badauni

[410]J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the year 1689*, ed. H.G., Oxford University Press, London : Humphery Milford, 1929, p. 110.
[411] Thevenot & Careri, p. 246.

records that the *tuldan* of Akbar took place when he was in one of the dependencies of Jaunpur.[412]

> …the Kings Birth-day and the solemnitie of his weighing, to which I went, and was carried into a very large and beautifull Garden; the square within all water; on the sides flowers and trees; in the midst a Pinacle, where was prepared the scales, being hung in large tressels, and a crosse beame plated on with Gold thinne, the scales of massie Gold, the borders set with small stones, Rubies and Turkey, with Chaines of Gold large and massie, but strengthened with silk cords. Here attended the Nobilitie, all sitting about it on Carpets, vntill the King came; who at last appeared clothed, or rather loden with Diamonds, Rubies, Pearles, and other precious vanities, so great, so glorious! ... Suddenly hee entered into the scales, sate like a woman on his legges, and there was put against him many bagges to fit his weight, which were changed six times, and they say was siluer, and that I vunderstood his weight to be nine thousand *Rupias*, which are almost one thousand pound sterling. After with Gold and Iewels, and precious stones, but I saw none; it beeing in bagges might bee Pibles…[413]

The ceremony was such a vital Mughal ceremony in building the image of the Emperor that he had the occasion captured by the court painters. *The weighing of Shah-Jahan on his forty-second lunar birthday* painted by Bhola in 1635 which shows Shah Jahan being weighed on a massive balance against a heap of bags at the *Diwan-i-kha*s on 23 October 1632. All his men are shown assembled for the occasion. On the other side of the scene can be seen female dancers and musicians, dancing and playing music.[414]

Ceremonies like *tuladan* were surely an occasion to impress the ones attending them. Jahangir especially wanted Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador of the English King, King James to his court to witness the *tuladan* on 2 September 1616 and therefore had instructed Asaf Khan to bring him with him to see the ceremony. However owing to some misunderstanding on the part of Asaf Khan, the English ambassador was not allowed to enter till the Emperor had come for the *darbar* and thus could not witness the

[412] Badauni, vol. II, p. 85.
[413] Roe, pp. 411-2.
[414] *The Padshahnama*, pp. 44-5.

ceremony. On knowing this, Jahangir reprimanded the noble.[415] Though Sir Thomas Roe did not fail to examine how opulently the Emperor was dressed in jewels after the conclusion of the ceremony. He observed, 'He was so rich in jewells that I must confesse I never saw together so unvaluable wealth.'[416] Another important aspect of the ceremony was that for the Emperor it was a means to exhibit his 'superior wealth and power'[417] through his acts of charity. Whatever valuables weighed against the body of the Emperor were distributed to his poor and needy subjects.

Navroz was yet another important festivity celebrated at the court. In India it was first introduced by the Ilbari Sultan Balban. From the times of Akbar, the Mughals celebrated it. Badauni informs that Akbar:

> kept the festival in the old manner, and held a high feast. And every day he received hospitality from every stall-holder among the Amirs, and suitable presents, so that even food, and scents, and presents fit for dancing-girls, were admitted into the treasury. And from a commander of 5,000, down to an Ahadi they were all obliged to bring presents and gifts and offerings. And even this worthless atom, who is of no account at all, except that I am called an Hazari on account of my being honoured with 1,000 bighas of land, followed the example of the old father of Joseph (peace be on him!) and brought my 40 rupees, and they had the honour of being accepted…[418]

Jahangir wrote in his autobiography that in the Mughal dominion, the festival was started by his father.[419] The nobles had to get choice gifts of precious jewels and jewelled items and elephants and horses, etc., for the Emperor. Jahangir observed similar formalities with respect to the festival. The nobles were instructed to adorn the porticos of the *diwan-i-am* and *diwan-i-khas*, both as was done in the times of his father. However Jahangir had not accepted gifts from his men and subjects (barring a very few selected and close ones, only to 'gratify them') on *Navroz* celebrated in the first year of his reign. He contributed

[415] Roe, pp. 221-2
[416] Ibid., p. 222.
[417] Vijay Nath, *Dana: Gift System in Ancient India (c. 600 B.C.-c. A.D. 300), A Socio-Economic Perspective*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1987, p. 44.
[418] Badauni, vol. II, p. 353.
[419] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 49.

it to the fact that his mind was 'inclined to the comfort and ease of the army and subjects.'[420] Appointments and promotions were made. The court was open to singers and dancers of all castes and bands. Drinks and drugs were offered to anyone who was interested in consuming those.[421] It was continued under Shah Jahan as well.

Aurangzeb forbade the observation of Navroz. Khafi Khan while giving the reason for banning the festival by the Emperor, writes:

> The *Nauroz* celebrated by the *Majusies* (Parsis) in Kirman and the port of Surat on the first of *Farwardin* is in no way related to our *Nauroz*, which is also known as *Nauroz-i Sultani*; the reckoning of the year and the months in the government offices of Iran and Turan is (merely) in the names of the months of old Persia. The *Nauroz-i Sultani* is celebrated even now in most of the countries of Ajam, and by the kings of Turan, Balk and Bokhara… Nevertheless, the religious emperor, having regard for the increase of piety, did not wish the celebration of *Nauroz-i Sultani* to be continued as it was similar to the *Nauroz* celebration of the *Majuses* and to their years and months.[422]

The Mughal ceremonies were inspired from varied sources. The practice of conferring *tika* or the right to rule was one of the very essential Rajput institutions of kingship. It was only after the conferral of *tika* that a new ruler's power was recognized and legitimized. Robert C. Hallissey observes that the reason the Mughals could exercise 'ultimate power' over the Rajputs was because of their adoption of the right to officially grant *tika* to a new Rajput ruler.[423] Now a Rajput ruler was formally not a ruler of his respective domain if his claim to throne was not recognized by the Mughal Emperor. Also, a Rajput ruler who had a formal imperial consent to rule over his territory could not nominate his heir apparent without the approval of the Mughal Emperor. Thus this set a disposition of eagerness among the Rajput potentates who were under the Mughal service to nominate their preferred sons as their successors and get their nomination imperial acceptance. This was, in addition, useful in evading any war of succession. This is also to

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[420] Ibid., vol. I, p. 49.
[421] Ibid., vol. I, pp. 48-9.
[422] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 136.
[423] Robert C. Hallissey, *The Rajput Rebellion Against Aurangzeb, A Study of the Mughal Empire in 17th-c. India*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London, 1977, p. 26.

be noted that through the *tika* ceremony, the venue for this significant Rajput ceremony was not any Rajput court but now it was shifted to the Mughal court. A subjugated Rajput ruler had to personally attend the court of the Mughals and bow his head to receive the tika or the right to rule in the full view and presence of the courtiers. Clearly, in this Rajput ceremony of kingship, the Mughal Emperor had the most primary function to perform. Also, the personal attendance of the local Rajput raja at the Mughal court is significant here because with the grant of the *tika*, he had been included in the Mughal aristocratic circle and that either he or his heir-apparent had to stay at the imperial court for at least the duration of one month and be conversant with the Mughal court culture. Thus the Mughal court was no less than a finishing school where the brutes were tamed and civilized and taught proper manners, appropriate to the station of a high-ranking *amir*.

Court Protocols

'The more he exaggerated the etiquette of humility, the more I increased my show of favor and affection by ordering him to sit near me.'[424]

The above mentioned statement is of the Emperor, Jahangir who on being so much pleased by the demeanor of his son, Prince Khurram that he showered multiple royal favours on him, thus, highlighting the significance of protocols in the Mughal court society. Once the protocols were well-embedded in the court society, they were often fiercely guarded; sometimes they were secured even when the Emperor himself made some concession about the observance.

The court had the throne placed in the middle and the space before it was to be kept open. Courtiers stood to the right and left of the throne forming two wings. The right and left sides were assigned to people belonging to different ranks and professions. The placement of men at the court was reflective of his proximity to the Emperor and his rank and was also full of implications. The favoured ones were placed on the right hand side while the offenders or criminal were brought and presented before the Emperor from the left side. The favourite nobles were allowed to stand near the throne. Mahabat Khan and

[424] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 155-6.

Asaf Khan stood at the court of Shah Jahan on his left and right sides close to the throne. Jahangir was the first ruler who allowed Shah Jahan to sit on a chair at court near the throne. 'This was a special favour for my son, as it had never been the custom hereto fore'. Later on Shah Jahan permitted Dara Shukoh to sit on a golden chair near the throne.[425] Impressed by the hard work of the *Wazir*, Asad Khan, Aurangzeb designated him the right side of the darbar as a mark of distiction.[426] A similar modus operandi was noticeable at the court of the Shah of Persia. Humayun was placed towards the right side of Shah Tahmasp when the Mughal Emperor had met the Shah at his court.[427] As soon as the Emperor entered the court, every courtier was to offer their salutations to the Emperor, indicating their readiness for the service to the Emperor.[428] Celebrated artists, musicians, singers, poets, wrestlers and other entertainers adorned the imperial court.[429]

The Mughal court was attended by the royal princes, nobles and petitioners. The royal ladies could not be visibly present at the court.[430] When at court, the relationship between the Emperor and the princes was not that of a father and a son but that of a superior and dependent and the latter had to render their service to the Emperor faithfully. They had to abide by the norms of the court - from the kind of dress they wore to the place of their standing at the court and others. The places of princes and nobles were reserved at a certain distance from the throne. The Emperor at the court often had one of his sons to fan him.[431] The assembled courtiers were not to speak or move from his assigned place in the court without seeking permission. Silence was to be maintained as the court protocol. Violation of these rules invited the wrath of the Emperor. To allow someone to come close to the *jharoka* (balcony) and near the throne was a special favour. Prince Khurram,

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[425]Manucci, vol. I, p. 88.
[426] *Storia*, Vol. III, p. 399.
[427]*The Tazkereh al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun, written in the Persian Language by Jouher, A confidential Domestic of His Majesty*, tr. Major Charles Stewart, Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, Delhi, 1972, p. 64.
[428]*Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 157. The Mughal courtiers stood putting their hands on breast signifying the posture of, as Abul Fazl writes, *amada-i-khidmat* (ready to serve).
[429]*Ibid*., p. 156.
[430] The absence of the person of the royal ladies was not to be noticed at European courts. Before Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador to Timur, was appointed as the ambassador for the mission, in one of his meetings, he went to the Emperor's private chamber. He writes, 'With the Emperor at our audience had been present the Empress [Irene] his wife…'. Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403-1406*, tr. Guy Le Strange, Hardinge Simpole Ltd, Scotland, 2009, p. 37.
[431]Taverrnier, vol. I, p. 88.

on his return after securing the submission of Mewar and the Deccan Sultanates, was given this honour. Jahangir allowed him to come near the throne, rose himself from the throne and embraced him.[432] Roe was in near-daily attendance in the court and camp of Jahangir for nearly three years (1615-1618). He established an affable relationship with the Emperor by becoming one of Jahangir's favourite drinking partners. He selected and initiated him among his favoured nobles. Roe himself, although was not aware of the full significance of the event, became a disciple of Jahangir. In 1616 Jahangir favoured the ambassador by enacting, without warning, the ceremony of initiation. Selection as a royal disciple was a signal honour. Those who wore the tiny portraits of the Emperor were an elect group of imperial servants.

To maintain the court protocol, an official was appointed and he was called *mir tuzak* (the master of the ceremonies). On being appointed to this office, the official's rank was increased as well. Shah Jahan had appointed Khwaja Inayatullah Naqshbandi as *mir tuzak* and gave the *mansab* of 1000.[433] The tasks of the *mir tuzak* were to assign the men attending the court their respective spots where they could stand as per their ranks, to oversee other arrangements like the proper display of royal standards, provision of upholsteries, spreading of carpets, etc. At the Persian court too, *mir tuzak* was appointed with such tasks.[434] When a new person was presented at the court, he was first instructed by the *mir tuzuk* on how to behave before the Emperor and to perform *taslim.*[435] On his entry to the court he was thoroughly searched, then guided by court officials and announced before the Emperor. After performing *taslim* or *kornish*, he addressed the Emperor in a low tone and presented his gifts. If the Emperor wanted to give him a favour, his presents were taken personally and a few words were said to him, otherwise he was unceremoniously dismissed. If the Emperor was angry with a noble, he was asked not to come to the court for certain days as a punishment, because permission to attend the court was regarded as privilege for selected persons. The discredited noble soon tried

[432]*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 277.
[433]*Tazkirat-Umara of Kewal Ram, Biographical Account of the Mughal Nobility 1556-1707 A.D.*, tr.) S.M. Azizuddin Husain, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1985, p. 229.
[434] See *The Tazkereh al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun,* p. 64.
[435]Manucci, vol. I, pp. 87-88.

to win the favour of the Emperor through the intercession of some nobles. Permission to allow him to come to the court was a symbol of forgiveness on the part of the Emperor.

Princes and nobles appointed to a province could not come to the royal court whenever they wanted. They had to first express their desire to come to the court, stating the purpose and wait for the royal permission. If the Emperor found it unnecessary to summon a prince or a noble to the court, the latter was not to leave his allotted place. During Jahangir's reign, it was not only the Emperor who was entitled to issue such a royal order, but his principal consort, Nur Jahan too granted or denied permissions to attend the court. A *nishan* addressed by her to Mirza Raja Jai Singh, dated 25 December 1626 (नविन नं. 175/पूर्व नं. 16) highlights this.

> आपने दरबारे आली में उपस्थिति के लिए निवेदन किया था, चूँकि वर्तमान में उस सूबे में ऐसे आवश्यक अभियान सम्मुख हैं की इस प्रकार के व्यक्ति (आप जैसे व्यक्ति) वहां ही रहने चाहिए अतः आपको दरगाहे आली (दरबार) में नहीं बुलाया ।[436]

Anyone who dared to advance to the court was severely punished for his action because moving for the imperial court without any appropriate royal permission was seen as an act of defiance. Sometimes important nobles received royal *farman* as a mark of favour from the Emperor, inviting the former to come to the court on an important occasion. Shah Jahan in his *farmans* to Raja Jai Singh dated 15 August 1640[437] and 16 September 1651[438] summoned him to the imperial court to attend the *tuladan* ceremony. If there was any forthcoming festival or ceremony at the court, he would ask his noble to start out and organize his march in such a manner that the noble would surely not miss the important occasion. The noble, certainly, could not afford to neglect the royal command or even delay his arrival at the court for the event. Late arrival at the court meant breach of court

[436] फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक, भाग -3, p. 18.
[437] *A Descriptive of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans addressed by the Imperial Mughals to the Prince of Rajasthan*, p.7.
[438] Ibid. p.9.

protocol and could prove enough to invite the Emperor's ire (as we see in the case of Shivaji).

Speech and comportment were an integral part of the court. Simple and overt way of speaking was a potential cause of one's downfall in the social hierarchy and even sometimes, it also led to one's death. After taking possession of a strong fortress of Chunar, Humayun asked one of his nobles, named Rumy Khan, to name one among him who could command it well. He answered that not a single one of them was worthy of the honour except Beg Myrek and that other than him, none to be permitted to even come close to the fortress. Humayun made Beg Myrek the commander of the fortress, but the incident was enough to irate the other nobles who conspired and poisoned Rumy Khan.[439]

The author of the *Dhakhirat-ul-Khwanin* has stated that when Shah Jahan conceived the idea of conquering Balkh and Badakshan he asked Tarbiyat Khan for his opinion on the subject. That honest man, who had recently become acquainted with the countries, represented without any dissimulation that the Emperor should never contemplate carrying out any campaigns there. As horses and men there were more numerous than ants and locusts, and as Indians would not be able to withstand the snow and cold of the country, there would be no end to the affair. By chance the Emperor also asked Mulla Fadil Kabuli, who was one of the most learned men, what he thought of the project of extricating his ancestral properties from the hands of the *Changezi* princes. The Mulla replied that to make war on the people of that country who were all Muhammadans was contrary to the *Shariat* Law, and would end in loss. Shah Jahan was greatly offended and said that if time-servers pronounced such judgments, and *Bakshis* frightened the soldiers about snow and cold, how campaigns could be carried out. He sent off the *Mulla* on pilgrimage to Mecca, and removed Tarbiyat Khan from his post of *Bakhshi*. The later thereupon swooned and died.[440]

Aurangzeb put a lot of emphasis on fine speech and bearings and was prompt in demoting the officers if their comportment was not agreeable to him. When one of the

[439] *The Tezkereh al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, pp. 10-11.
[440]Nawab Samsam-ud-daula Shah Nawaz Khan and Abdul Hayy, *The Maasir-ul-umara*, vol. II, Janaki Prakashan, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 932-933.

nobles, Hussain Ali Khan fought verbally with his (Aurangzeb's) grandson Ma'az-ud-Din Bahadur and without informing Bahadur, reported to the court of the Mughal Emperor. Aurangzeb on learning the whole situation, ordered for the offending officer's demotion and the confiscation of his *jagir*.[441] However oftentimes Aurangzeb was not very overt in exhibiting his displeasure. The general, Bahadur Khan, one of the foster-brothers and the son of the wet-nurse of Aurangzeb, was quite audacious in his behaviour which was not approved of the Emperor. It was ordered that the general's palanquin was to be placed after the palanquin of the *Wazir*, Asad Khan. Knowing already about the order, Bahadur Khan excused himself from attending the court the next day. Instead he instructed his men not to let it happen. The next day when the order was being carried, the men of Bahadur Khan resisted and there erupted a bloody fight. The Emperor in order to cover up his design, paid a visit to the general after some days, reassuring him that his palanquin would be placed where earlier it used to be, for 'He feared the power and ability of Bahadur Khan, and he knew him to be an intimate friend of Shah 'Alam. The king feared that if Bahadur Khan learnt that the affront had been given by his orders, he might ally himself with the prince and raise a rebellion'.[442]

One can also get a fair understanding of the court ambience through examining the paintings which are available to us and also those though extinct now but their description can still be found in contemporary accounts. William Finch describes a small court where often the emperor would spend his night time from eight to eleven. He notices on the walls of this court:

> the Kings Picture sitting cross-legged on a chaire of State: on his right-hand Sultan Pervese, Sultan Caroone, and Sultan Timoret, his sonnes: next these, Sha Morat, and Don Sha, two of his brothers (the three baptized before spoken, were sonnes of this later) next them Emersee Sheriff, eldest brother to Caun Asom…'[443] He also speaks of wall paintings on a gallery which led to the jharoka balcony, 'On the wall of this Gallery is drawne the Picture of the Acabar sitting

[441] *Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri* or *Letters of Aurangzebe*, trs. H. Jamshid and B. A. Bilimoria, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1972, p. 103.
[442] *Storia*, vol. III, p. 402.
[443] Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Containing a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*, vol. IV, James MacLehose and Sons, Glasgow, p. 53.

> in his State, and before him Sha Selim his sonne: standing with a Hawke on his fist, and by him Sultan cusseroom, Sultan Pervis, Sultan Caroome, his three sonnes…[444]

In '*The Darbar of Shah Jahan*'[445], painted in 1645 A.D. now at the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Varanasi, the court protocol is strikingly represented. The Emperor, Shah Jahan, shown in profile, is seated on his throne. The Courtiers are standing in well-arranged rows. In the first row are standing very important officials like Mirza Raja Jai Singh, etc. and these nobles are shown without their slippers on as they were the favoured ones who were permitted to enjoy the closer proximity to the Emperor unlike others and therefore, the closer they were allowed to be to the person of the Emperor, the higher degree of reverence it entailed. At the lower rung of the row is an elephant with its rider, both saluting the Emperor. While on the other side of the same row is standing an exquisite blue roan horse with its beautiful trappings.

The illustrations of the *Padshahnama* give an insight into the activities performed by the Mughal Emperor at his court. A painting entitled '*Jahangir receives Prince Khurram on his return from the Mewar Campaign*', attributed to Balchand in 1635 shows that on his arrival from a successful Mewar campaign, Prince Khurram was given an audience by his father, Jahangir at the Diwan-i-'Amm at Ajmer on 20 February, 1615.[446] One more painting with a similar title and theme, '*Jahangir receives Prince Khurram on his return from the Mewar Campaign*', painted by Murar in 1640 depicts a darbar scene where the Emperor Jahangir welcomes his son, Khurram at the diwan-i-am by taking him in his embrace just as it is shown in the painting done by Balchand. The *Padshahnama* records about the event, '…(Prince Khurram) attained the felicity of paying homage to his mighty father. His Imperial Majesty was so kind and appreciative that he took him in an embrace.'[447] Jahangir in his memoir writes on the reception of the prince by him at the

[444] Ibid, p. 54.
[445] *Mughal Miniatures*, Texts and Notes by Rai Krishnadasa, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1955, Plate 8.
[446] Milo Cleveland Beach & Ebba Koch, *King of the World, The Padshahnama, An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library*, Wheeler M. Thackston, tr., Windsor Castle, Azimuth Editions, Sackler Gallery, London, 1997, pp. 94-5.
[447] *The Padshahnama*, p. 28.

imperial *darbar*, accentuating the showering of the warmth of the royal father on a great military success of his son in the full view of his assembled courtiers at the *darbar*.[448]

There is another painting called '*Jahangir receives Prince Khurram*', painted by Abid in 1635.[449] Here the Emperor is seen receiving prince Khurram at the *diwan-i-am* at Ajmer before he set out for the Deccan campaign in 1616. It is the only painting wherein Jahangir is shown wearing a *bazuband* or an armlet which reminds us of an incident which Jahangir records in his memoir. Jahangir writes that after subduing the Rana of Mewar in a military campaign, Prince Khurram at Ajmer had presented Jahangir a luminous ruby worth 60,000 rupees. In '*Jahangir receives Prince Khurram on his return from the Deccan*'[450] painted by Murar in 1640, the Emperor at Mandu gave an audience at the *diwan-i-am* to his royal son on 10 October 1617 after he triumphantly finished his military expeditions in the Deccan. Jahangir showered many imperial favours on his son in the *darbar*.[451]

The subjugated local potentates were to essentially and formally come and attend the Mughal durbar to acknowledge their subservient position and the Mughal Emperor as their lord. *The submission of Rana Amar Singh of Mewar to Prince Khurram*[452], an illustration attributed to the 'Kashmiri painter' finished in 1640 portrays Rana Amar Singh, the Rana of Mewar, prostrating before the Prince Khurram in his *darbar* at Gogunda (Mewar state) on 5 February 1615 while Abdullah Khan, one of the umrah, had placed his hand on the Rana's back, which appears as if he was carefully administering him about the court etiquette. The painters, Balchand and Murar, had captured the momentous event of the arrival of the Rana's son and the heir-apparent, Karan Singh at the court of the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir.[453]

A Mughal prince or a Mughal noble was an exceedingly refined man who was fully acquainted with court protocols. A lot of emphasis was found to be placed on the

[448] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 276-7.
[449] *The Padshahnama*, pp. 92-3.
[450] Ibid., pp. 36-7.
[451] For details, see *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 395.
[452] *The Padshahnama*, pp. 32-3.
[453] For the paintings, please see *The Padshahnama*. Ibid., pp. 29, 94.

personal attendance of the Rajas, chieftains, landlords, etc. to the Mughal court where they were familiarized with court etiquettes and their placement in them. The proper observation of court rituals and protocols was one of the integral parts of the functioning of the court, for guarding them meant guarding the distinctions of status. Those exhibiting any sign of lack of prescribed etiquettes were regarded as brute and insignificant.

Jadunath Sarkar while contemplating on the disastrous audience of Shivaji with Aurangzeb in 1666, opines that 'the real seed of all the trouble' was his inadequate awareness about the Mughal court protocols.[454] After the signing of the treaty of Purandar between Shivaji and Raja Jai Singh on 11 June 1665, a calculated measure was taken to summon Shivaji to the imperial court on the grand day of the 50th lunar birthday of Aurangzeb on 12 May 1666. The old and incarcerated Emperor, Shah Jahan had died at Agra on 22 January of the said year. Aurangzeb, for the first time, was holding his birthday celebration at Agra. Therefore the event was chosen to be organized on a much grander scale. To witness court in all its regal grandeur and paraphernalia and to infuse a sense of wonder in the mind of the Maratha Raja, he was instructed to reach the court one day before the grand celebration. However he could only reach the very same day as the day of the celebration and that too in the afternoon. Consequently he had to be hurried instantly to the imperial presence without being instructed about court protocols.

Arriving late to the grand court on such a day of regal significance foiled the prospects for both, for Shivaji as well as for Aurangzeb. The Mughal Emperor had intended to make the Maratha Raja personally eyewitness one of the royal celebrations and its magnificence which could not materialize. On the day of his birthday celebrations, the Mughal Emperor performed *tuladan* in the morning. He received gifts from the royal members and his nobles. Besides, before the day of his birthday, his nobles were to decorate the *durbar*, showing their eagerness and enthusiasm as participants in the vital regal rituals. Shivaji, reaching in the afternoon on the day of the celebration, had already

[454] S. Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, Orient Longman Ltd., Bombay Calcutta Madras New Delhi, 1973, p. 140.

missed a lot of crucial parts of the celebration. Thus he failed to meet the anticipation of the Emperor.

That being so, when Shivaji was conducted into the imperial presence, he felt slighted. Aurangzeb spoke not a single word to him. he felt further affronted when he was place in the third row of the assembled men which was consisted of five-*hazari* mansabdars. He was also bestowed no *khilat* as other chief nobles on the occasion. In utter disgust and anger, Shivaji left the court, only to be arrested and incarcerated soon on the account of his displeasing act in the imperial *darbar*. Thus 'the difference in Shivaji's self-perception and Aurangzeb's perception of him, expressed in the space allotted to him in the court', in the opinion of Harbans Mukhia, was the reason for the unsuccessful rendezvous, causing its dark shadow in the history of the Indian subcontinent.[455]

In another instance when the court decorum was well laid-out, Amar Singh Rathore of Marwar in the royal *darbar* of Shah Jahan which was being held at *Khilwatkhana* in Prince Dara Shikoh's mansion[456], slain one of the courtiers, Salabat Khan with his dagger.[457] Of the incident, Prince Dara Shikoh in his undated *nishan* to Mirza Raja Jai Singh wrote:

> हमको राजपूतों विशेषकर राठौड़ों की नमकहलाली (स्वामिभक्ति) एवं निष्कपट आस्था पर पूरा भरोसा था, किन्तु इस अदूरदर्शी से ऐसी हीन त्रुटि प्रयोग में आई । (ऐसी बुरी हरकत ज़ाहिर हुई) कि एक सत्यनिष्ठ बन्दे (चाकर) को बादशाह के दरबार में बिना कारण के नष्ट कर दिया एवं स्वयं भी, जो कि हमारा प्रशिक्षण व पालन-पोषण किया हुआ था एवं उचित यह था कि ऐसे बन्दे किसी बड़े एवं श्रेष्ठ कृत्य में काम आते, हलाक (मृत) होकर दण्डित हुआ और अपने पुत्रों के लिए भी स्थान न छोड़ा। और उसके बहुत से राजपूत बेअदबी (अनादर) करने के कारण मारे गए ।

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[455] Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India*, Blackwell Publishing, Victoria, Australia, 2004, p. 74.

[456] Shahjahan with his daughter, Jahanara Begum had come to stay in the mansion of his eldest son, Dara Shikoh, situated on the bank of river Yamuna for a period of five days. मुंशी देवीप्रसाद, *शाहजहांनामा,* भाग-२, संपादक डॉ. रघुबीर सिंह, मनोहर सिंह राणावत, मैकमिलन कंपनी ऑफ़ इंडिया लिमिटेड, दिल्ली, १९७५, पृ॰ १८६ ।

[457] Ibid., पृ॰ १८६-७ ।

राजपूतों से इस प्रकार का अनादर न तो बादशाह अकबर के काल में और न जहांगीर बादशाह के काल में घटित हुआ ।बादशाह सलामत (शाह जहाँ) के शासनकाल में इस अशोभनीय कार्य के घटित होने से इस अदूरदर्शी के कारण राठौड़ों के प्रति अत्यधिक अविश्वसनीयता उत्पन्न हो गई ।

बादशाह सलामत ने यह भी फ़रमाया कि ऐसी स्थिति में जब कि आप वस्तु स्थिति से अवगत थे कि अमर सिंह दीवाना हो गया है तो आपकी स्वामिभक्ति से यह अपेक्षा न थी कि आपने इस पागल के हाल से हमको अवगत न किया ।

...जो व्यक्ति कोई अशोभनीय कार्य करता है तो वह दण्डित होता है ।[458]

In the above mentioned *nishan*, Dara Shikoh displaying his utter disgust and disappointment for the incident, regarded the offender as 'demented' and expressed his doubts over the loyalty of the Rajput community especially the Rathors towards the empire. The gravity of the matter was such that the Mughal accounts record of punishing the defaulter right on the spot. ...खलीलुल्ला खां ने अमरसिंह पर तलवार का वार किया । अर्जुन ने भी हिम्मत करके तलवार के दो वार किये । इसके साथ ही सैयद सालार और सात-आठ दूसरे गर्ज़बरदार (गदाधारी) मनसबदारों ने दाएं-बाएं से दौड़ कर तलवारों से अमरसिंह का काम तमाम कर दिया ।[459] In another Mughal account, a similar kind of description of the event is recorded, 'On this catastrophe Khalil Ullah K. and Arjan the son of Rajah Bethal Das Gaur fell upon him. He struck Arjan two or three times with his dagger, and Khalil Ullah K. struck Amar Singh with his sword. Meanwhile other men came up and finished him'.[460] On the other hand, the incident with a variation is preserved in Rajasthani folk traditions. The principal theme in the *Amar Battisi*, composed in Hindi by Haridas Kavi in 1701, pertains to Amar Singh's Rathore's immediate retribution inflicted on Salabat

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[458] *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक,* भाग-3, पृ॰ २३७-८ ।

[459] *शाहजहां-नामा,* पृ॰ १८७ ।

[460] *Maasir-ul-umara*, vol. I, pp. 233-4.

Khan for insulting the former in the imperial court and eulogizing him for his chivalry.[461] Above examples of defiance of court protocols even in the times of the glorious Mughals show that the scope for the contestation of power can never be completely eliminated.

Salutations

Salutations required the act of bowing, placing the highest and purest part of the body of a performer before the lowest part of the body for who it was performed. Thus as a gesture of submission, it was 'a potentially demeaning act', 'closely connected to courtly ethics, particularly the dynamics of pride and humility'.[462] The rulers of defeated kingdoms had to come to the court personally or send their representative in some cases to exhibit their submission publicly though the gesture of submission.

When the salutation[463] exchanged between the two people of equal status, it had to be responded in an equal manner. Jauhar recorded that when on one occasion the Shah of Persia happened to pass by the residence of Humayun, 'his Majesty came to the door and made his salutation ; but as it was not returned in a polite manner the King was much hurt…and began to reproach himself for having sought protection with Shah Tahmasp, whose behavior was not sufficiently courteous.'[464]

Father Xavier observed the salutation performed by one of the defeated local kings in the year of 1595 who had come to the court of Akbar for the first time to formally accept his subjugation. He writes:

> This King, when he entered the hall where the Great Mogor was seated, and while yet a long way off, bowed himself down, touching the ground with his hands and head ; then, advancing little by little, he made the same reverence

[461] D. N. Marshall, *Mughals in India: A Bibliographical Survey*, vol. I, Asia Publishing House, 1967, p. 175.
[462] Ali, Daud, 'Aristocratic Body Techniques in Early Medieval India', ed. Rajat Datta, *Rethinking a Millennium, Perspectives on Indian History from the 8th to the 18th c., Essays for Harbans Mukhia*, Aakar Books, 2008, p. 79.
[463] The Timurid way of performing salutation required 'placing the knee on the ground, and crossing the arms on the breast ; then they went forward and made another ; and then a third, remaining with their knees on the ground'. Clavijo, p. 132.
[464] *The Tazkereh al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, p. 65.

> several times. When he had come near to the King, he was felt all over, to see if he carried arms ; after which he advanced and touched the feet of his Majesty. Who made no other motion or sign of his goodwill beyond placing his hand on his vassal's neck ; and even this was more than he did to others. The new Tributary then rose to his feet and took the place assigned to him, and which he kept from time forward, amongst the other Princes and Captains of the court.[465]

Abul Fazl had expounded two kinds of salutation which were prevalent during Akbar's time. One was *taslim* (literally submission) was a higher form of salutation than *kornish*. Regarding *taslim*, 'the regulation is that favoured servants place the back of their right hand on the ground and then raise it gently; as the person stands erect, he puts the palm of his hand upon the crown of his head. In this pleasing manner he makes a submission of himself. This is called *taslim*.'[466] Careri had observed that on receiving food from the imperial kitchen, the noble assigned to mount the guard had to take it with much reverence and was to perform the *taslim* thrice facing towards the imperial residence.[467]

Another mode called *Kornish* was a form of a salutation in which the palm of the right hand of a saluter was placed upon the forehead and the head bent downwards. In the words of Abul Fazl, it signified that the saluter, 'placing his head, which is the source of life's senses and reason, into the hand of humility, has made a gift of it to the sacred assembly, he has thus placed himself in obedience to any command.[468] Following the successful Mewar campaign, when the Prince Khurram reported at the *darbar* of Jahangir, the very first thing he was to do was to perform the court etiquette. 'two watches and two *gharis*[469] of the day had passed, and he had the fortune to pay his respects, and performed his prostrations and salutations…When he had finished the dues of service and had presented his offerings and charities, he petitioned that Karan might be exalted with the good fortune of prostrating himself and paying his respects. I ordered them to bring him and the Bakhshis with the usual ceremonies of respect produced him.

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[465] Pierre du Jarric, *Akbar & the Jesuits: an account of the Jesuit missions to the court of Akbar*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, p. 64.
[466] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 167.
[467] Thevenot & Careri, p. 243.
[468] Ibid., pp. 166-67.
[469] A measure of time equivalent to 24 minutes.

after prostration and salutation were completed, at the request of my son Khurram, I ordered them to place him in front on the right hand of the circle'[470] Likewise when the Prince Khurram had returned from the Deccan campaign and came to the *darbar* to attend it, Jahangir recalls, 'After he had performed the dues of salutation and kissing the ground, I called him up into the Jharokha, and with exceeding kindness and uncontrolled delight rose from my place and held him in the embrace of affection…'[471] While the prince was to perform his salutation to the Emperor, the Emperor made his prominent courtiers to pay homage to his son, thus, clearly signaling the hierarchy of men assembled at his court through court protocols. After the Emperor was presented the gifts by the prince, he ordered his men to perform their salutations and present suitable gifts as per their rank.

Yet another kind of salutation, called *sijda* or prostration was reserved for a few selected ones who were favoured by Akbar by letting them observe it.[472] Of this form of salutation, Badauni remaked, 'He invented a *sijdah* (prostration) for him, and called it *zaminbos* (kissing the ground). [473] The symbolic meaning of the salutation performed depended on the performer and for who it was performed. The disciples of the Emperor performed *sijda* before him which is a form of salutation exclusively reserved for Allah. According to Fazl, the performance of *sijda* by His Majesty's disciples was regarded as 'a prostration performed before God ; for royalty is the emblem of the power of God, and a light-shedding ray from this Sun of the Absolute.' However later Akbar had to restrict the performace of *sijda* to his private assembly and permitted only the Elect to observe it, because 'some perverse and dark-minded men look upon prostration as blasphemous man-worship.'[474] The deeper the modesty reflected through the mode of obeisance, the

[470] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 277.
[471] Ibid, vol. I, pp. 393-4.
[472] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 167.
[473] Badauni, vol. II, p. 266. Fernao Nuniz who wrote probably in 1535-37 A.D, writes that the king of Vijaynagar, Achyuta Raya, 'confers very high honour, too, if he permits a certain one to kiss his feet, for he never gives his hands to be kissed by anyone'. Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire, Vijaynagar: A contribution to the History of India*, Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, 1962, p. 357.
[474] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 167.

higher was the proximity to the Emperor. Superior social rank in the society was expressed 'through the hierarchy of forms of obeisance.'[475]

On the accession of the imperial throne, Shah Jahan prohibited *sijda* n substituted it with *zaminbos* (kissing the ground);[476] yet as the one closely resembled the other in outward appearance, the latter ceremony was on this auspicious occasion (on the eve of his solar weighing on 16 Jan 1637) abolished as well, but the three successive obeisance, which were always made as an acknowledgement of any sign of the royal regard, were augmented to four(*chahar-taslim*).[477] The courtiers during Aurangzeb's reign were ordered to greet each with *salam* '*alekum.*[478] Aurangzeb also discontinued *Nauroz*[479] in 1659. In his letter addressed to his eldest son, Muhammad Muazzam, Aurangzeb rebuked him for observing the terminated festival and called it a 'heretical innovation'.[480] The Emperor gave two reasons for putting an end to the observation of *Nauroz*; firstly, it was a festivity of the *Majusis* or the ancient Persians[481] and secondly, this was the coronation day of Vikramajit[482] and thus it marked the inauguration of a Hindu era.[483]

Gift Ceremony

"Having obtained a kingdom, a king should win all, some by gifts, others by force and yet others by sweet speech".

—The Mahabharata[484]

[475]Douglas E. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford University Press, Bombay Calcutta Madras, 1989., p. 152.
[476] Rai Bhara Mal, Lubbu-t Tawarikh-i Hind, ed. H. M. Elliot, John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, vol. VII, Trubner & Co., London, 1877, p. 170.
[477]*Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 203.
[478]Saqi Mustad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri, A History of the Emperor Aurangzeb-'Alamgir (reign 1658-1707 AD)*, tr. Jadunath Sarkar, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1947, p. 13.
[479]Literally, it means the new day in Persian.
[480]*Ruqaat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 5.
[481]*Magis* was the term used by the Arabs to denote the ancient Persians.
[482]Vikramaditya, the ruler of Ujjain, defeated a Shaka king. The Scythians, called Shakas in Patanjali's *Mahabhasya* were originally central Asian nomadic tribes. D.N. Jha, *Ancient India in Historical Outline*,Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 114-5.
[483]This was Vikrama era, started in 57 B.C. to commemorate Vikramaditya's triumph. D.N. Jha, p. 115.
[484] Vijay Nath, *Dana: Gift System in Ancient India (c. 600 BC.-c. AD. 300), A Socio-Economic Perspective*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1987, p. 45.

Gifts can be defined as 'part of the complicated history of obligations and expectations between persons and households of roughly the same status, including those of kin, and between superiors and inferiors'.[485] The gift exchange ceremony was one of the important facets of the Mughal courtly culture and frequently took place between the Emperor and his men. It was one of the mediums of communication between the Mughal Emperor and the kings of other territories, of this we will discuss in the fourth chapter. Rituals like regular gift-giving promoted 'regnal unity'as termed by Susan Reynolds.[486]

Gifts by the Emperor

Babur was very generous when giving gifts. In a painting, titled 'Babur Distributes Presents in the Private Apartments of Ibrahim Lodi in Agra' from a MS. of the Babur Nama in the Persian translation of Mirza Abd ar-Rahim Khan Khanan, painted by Bhura in 1590 A.D. now at the British Museum, London, illustrates a scene when after the first Battle of Panipat in 1526, Babur had emerged victorious, he had organized a grand festivity at the royal palace of the defeated ruler, Ibrahim Lodi at Agra, just a few days after the festival of the Id of Shawwal. On this important occasion he bestowed gifts on his heir-apparent and on his important officials. To Humayun he gave a cloth of honour, a sword-belt and a horse with saddle mounted in gold. Thus the painting captures the generosity of Babur for which he was renowned among his men.[487]

The Emperor made gifts to his men for multiple reasons. One was to encourage their performance on battlefields, in the administration, etc. Akbar awarded Raja Todar Mal by gifting him a sword when he brought a clear balance-sheet of the accounts of Gujarat.[488] A robe of honour or *khilat* was one of the most significant categories of gifts given by the Emperor. It consisted of three, five, six or seven pieces. The *khilat* of three pieces consisted of a turban, a long coat with *jama* (skirt) and a *kamarband* (belt for the waist). The *khilat* of five pieces consisted of a *sarpech*, a band to tie round the short sleeve

[485] Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 56.
[486] Janet L. Nelson, 'The Lord's anointed and the people's choice: Carolingian royal ritual', ed. David Cannadine and Simon Price, *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 177.
[487] *Paintings of the Great Mughals*, Lalit Kala Series Portfolio No. 47, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 2001, Pls. II & III.
[488] Badauni, vol. II, p. 171.

known as *nim-astin* (half-sleeves). The *khilat* of seven pieces consisted of a turban, a *Qaba* (gown), a fitting coat, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of trousers, two shirts, two girdles and a scarf for the head/ neck.[489] To store the robes a special room was allotted called the *Toshakhana* and obtained as per the wishes of the Emperor.[490] Then there was the *Daghi* (a warm mantle) and *Fathi* dresses which were awarded. Akbar gave them after the fall of Bairam khan on Atka Khan.[491] The *saropa* was a dress consisting of all clothes from head to foot. There was another kind of a robe called the *Nadiri* which was the innovation of Jahangir.[492] Robes of honour were distributed twice a year, in winter, and in the rainy season[493] besides on other occasions.[494]

Khilat worn by the Emperor signified part of the glory, prestige and authority attached to his person. And when it was gifted to a noble or a mansabdar, it transformed the recipient of the honour into an extension of the Emperor.[495] Hence high prestige was associated with it. The *Khilat* was first touched by the Emperor with his palm; or else it was lightly brushed across his shoulder before handing it over to the recipient. A robe of honour when rewarded from the Emperor's personal wardrobe and especially off his person, it was considered to be an extremely great favour and it was mainly granted in recognition of some exceptional service a person had rendered to the empire.[496] The recipient of this honour had to come to the imperial court wearing it for three consecutive days. It distinguished him from other courtiers at the court.

Robes of honour was presented by the members of the royal family and nobles as well on significant matters. Nur Jahan sent a *khilat* to Mirza Raja Jai Singh about which she wrote in her *nishan* (dated 28 December 1625) to the said noble in the following words:

नवीन नं. 172/पूर्व नं. 25

[489]Tavernier, p. 18.
[490]Ibid., p. 80.
[491]*Akbar Nama*, vol. II, pp. 174-75.
[492]*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 384.
[493] *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, p. 236.
[494]*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 97.
[495] Douglas E. Streusand, p. 141.
[496]Manucci, vol. II, p. 469. Roe, p. 334.

बादशाही श्रेष्ठ कृपा से विशिष्ट व गौरवान्वित होकर ज्ञात करे कि हमने अत्यन्त मेहरबानी व सेवकों के प्रति कृपा-दृष्टि के निमित्त एक विशेष ख़िलअत ख़्वाजा रोजभान जो हमारा विश्वासपात्र अवं निकटस्थ है, के साथ कृपा-दृष्टि स्वरुप भेजा है।[497]

On the eve of the ninth coronation of Jahangir, a mansabdar of 4,000 rank at Jaunpur, named Chini Qilich Khan, had offered *saropa* to mark the event. उसने २८ वर्षीय सुकवि बनारसीदास को, बादशाह जहाँगीर के नवें राज्यवर्ष में सिरोपाव से सम्मानित किया ।

चीनी किलिच खान उमराव । तिन बुलाई दीनो सिरपाउ । (छंद ४४८)

बेटा बड़ो किलिच कौ, च्यार हज़ारी मीर ।[498]

Semi-precious stones and jewels were granted as gifts to princes and nobles. The Mughal Emperors used to send their agents and envoys to different parts of India and foreign countries in search of rare and precious stones and jewels. The giving of imperial beasts like horses, elephants, etc. from the royal stable as an award was also regarded as an honour. Jahangir viewed his horses daily and thirty were taken for presentation to nobles and others.[499] Administrative or military tasks, appointments, promotions, titles, ranks, *jagirs*, etc. were never granted without any accompaniment of appropriate gifts.

Jahangir and Shah Jahan started to give their portraits to their nobles as a gift. Books were given to the nobles as a royal favour from the royal library. Jahangir after having finished writing his memoirs *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* for the first twelve years of his reign made them into a volume and had a number of copies made and distributed. The first of these he gave to Prince Khurram, who was then in high favour. Apart from the prince, he also gave copies of it to Itimad-ud-Daula, Prince Parwez and others. When visiting

[497] *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक,* भाग- ३, p. 10.
[498] *Kavi Banarsidas*, p. 56.
[499] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. II, pp. 16, 25.

Ahmedabad, he presented to some shaikhs of Gujarat, the *Tafsir-i-Kashshaf* by Zamakhshari, the *Tafsir-i-Husaini* by Husain Kashifi and *Raudat-al-Ahbab* by Amir Jamal al -Din from the imperial library.[500] Animals from the royal stable also constituted a form of gift by the Emperor. Akbar presented Father Pigneiro a horse from his own stables before he embarked on his journey for Lahore, which was clearly a mark of favour shown to the Jesuit Father.[501]

Exchange of gifts, conferment of ranks of honour, and titles also aided in infusing a sense of loyalty in the Mughal nobles. During Jahangir's reign, the case of Mirza Nathan who had been in Mughal service in Bengal for more than a decade shows that by granting of gifts and titles by the lure of promotions, the loyalty of not only the courtiers was retained but also of those who could not attend the *darbar* for a long duration. Similarly Jahangir in his memoirs mentioned that when after the defeat of Raja Amar Singh of Mewar, he sent his son, Karan Singh at the Mughal *darbar*, he made him stay at the palace for a month and each day he pampered him with expensive gifts and that was how he integrated the subordinate ruler of Mewar into the imperial system. Besides granting titles, robes of honour (*khilat*) in full view of the courtiers on grand occasions not only gave the recipient an incentive to continue showing his loyalty at the court to receive such an honour from the Emperor to show their proof of loyalty to the Emperor. In short, such mechanisms were very important instruments of creating hierarchical relationship, evoking loyalty of the nobles, negotiating nobles' status and means of social bonding.

Gifts to the Emperor

Neither during the Delhi Sultanate nor in the reigns of Babur and Humayun was the giving of gifts to the Emperor recorded as an obligation. By the reign of Akbar, no one was to come to his presence without a gift befitting one's station, for the Emperor was permitting the person to enter his court which was an honour. This continued by his successors as well. Tavernier noted that no one could approach the Emperor's court without a gift and 'before everything else' the person wanting to attend the *durbar* were first and foremost questioned about the gift he had brought for the Emperor and 'they

[500]Ibid, vol. II, pp. 26-7, 37, 70.
[501] *Akbar & the Jesuits*, p. 159.

examine it to see if it is worthy of being offered to His Majesty'.[502] The Mughal Emperor received gifts from the royal princes, his vassals, his courtiers, ambassadors, and his subjects. No one could approach the Emperor empty-handed on being given the audience by him.[503] And it pleased him immensely to accept gifts which were truly rare and had not been seen before.[504] The Jesuit Fathers would often gift Akbar paintings associated with some Biblical themes. In one of the meetings, Father Emmanuel Pigneiro and Father Hierosme Xauier presented him a painting of Mary which was executed on paper only and drawn in ink and was uncoloured.[505] Yet on another meeting, they gifted him a picture of Lady of Lorete which was perhaps the black image of Mary at Lorete.[506] Father Xavier noted how Akbar received extremely splendid gifts from various important personalities from far and near places and that it was a 'very ordinary thing'.[507] He recorded that one of the subjugated local rulers offered his tribute to the Emperor amounting no less than two hundred thousand crowns which comprised of two poniards with their sheaths and girdles embedded with extremely valuable precious stones like carbuncles and rubies set in gold, two big gold vials and a horse magnificently adorned; its harness had numerous precious stones decorated in gold while a hundred other horses were embellished with green and crimson velvet. There was also an offering of four carpets and each was valued at two thousand crowns.

Father Xavier also pointed out that since Akbar was pleased with the offerings and showed his willingness to accept them, therefore, it was considered to be a matter of great imperial favour bestowed upon the subordinated ruler. The Father further observed sending of many valuable gifts by the son of the Emperor, Sultan Murad from Gujarat.

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[502] Tavernier, vol. I, p. 113.
[503] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 110.
[504] Akbar was very fond of receiving uncommon gifts. Once a noble by mistake broke one of the two China dishes the Emperor received as a gift from some king. As the China dishes were really prized by him, therefore, the furious Emperor first had the noble whipped and then sent him to Cattaya, giving 50,000 rupees to buy another piece. However as he was about to reach Cattaya after six months of travelling, he was called back to the imperial court, for the Emperor had changed his mind and also the noble regained the lost royal favour. In another case, a man had presented Akbar with an agate dish. He had one more dish of agate which he gifted to the Shah of Persia. On knowing it, Akbar had him incarcerated and imposed a fine of 200,000 rupees. *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617, Describing his Experiences in Arabia, India, and the Malay Archipelago*, William Foster, ed., The Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, pp. 166-7.
[505] *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 110-11.
[506] Ibid., p. 111.
[507] Ibid., p. 65.

The royal prince sent fifty elephants worth a hundred and fifty thousand crowns along with two chariots, one made of gold and another of silver. Gorgeous ornaments made of mother-of-pearl and other highly expensive things were also presented. This was followed by the arrival of gifts from the Viceroy of Bengal and his offerings amounted to eight hundred thousand crowns as he had also sent three hundred elephants besides other things. Receiving such expensive gifts every day had made the Mughal Emperor enormously wealthy, for in the span of one week his income through this custom of gift ceremony, he often obtained near about 'a million *d'or*'.[508] The evaluation of the cost of the gifted items was crucial and an account of all the gifts presented to the Emperor was maintained and the gifted items were stored in the imperial treasury.[509] During festivities such as *Navroz*, etc., the gifts he received were innumerable and tremendously costly. Father Xavier had observed a very expensive gift made to the Emperor by a captain amounting to more than five hundred thousand crowns. And from the presentation of such valuable gift by a single person, he remarked, 'it can be imagined how great must be the treasure which this Prince has amassed.'[510]

During the seventeen days of New Year festivity in March (*Nauroz*), it was customary for great nobles to invite the Emperor to their house and give choice presents of customary for great nobles to invite the Emperor to their house and give choice presents of semi-precious stones and jewels, fine beasts. On the eve of Jahangir's fourteenth *Nauroz* celebration, his gifts of the ruler of Golconda, Qutub-ul-Mulk, included two colossal elephants and five elephant-trappings. Jahangir named one of them *Nur-i- Nauroz* (the Light of New Year's Day) since the beast entered the private elephant-house on New Year 's Day. He mounted him and rode him into the courtyard of the palace and also fixed his value at Rs. 80,000, and the value of six others was fixed at Rs. 20,000. Jahangir was very pleased to see the elephant for it 'looked well to my eye'[511]. The second elephant, with silver housings, was also presented with Rs. 10,000 more in various choice jewels. The same day Shah Jahan, along with other gifts, presented the Emperor a *howdah* made of gold, amounting to Rs. 30,000.

[508] Ibid., p. 65.
[509] *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617,* p. 166.
[510] *Akbar & the Jesuits*, p. 66.
[511] Ibid., p. 79.

For gracing a noble house with the imperial presence, the Emperor's favour was to be responded with the presentation of rare and expensive gifts to him. Jahangir had once honoured Itimad-ud-Daulah with his presence to his house 'to add to his dignity'. Jahangir had recorded in his memoirs that the noble in return made his offerings to the Emperor which was examined by the latter 'in detail. Much of it was exceedingly rare. Of jewels there were two pearls worth 30,00o rupees, one *quibi* ruby which had been purchased for 22,000 rupees, with other pearls and rubies. Altogether the value was 110,000 rupees. These had the honour of acceptance, and of cloth, etc., the value of 15,000 rupees was taken'.[512] Likewise the governors had to suitably respond to the gifts especially when they received them from the Emperor himself. Aurangzeb, as informed by Careri, 'work'd Caps,, and presented them to the Governors of his Kingdoms and Provinces ; who in return for the Honour done them, sent him a Present of several Thousands of *Roupies*.'[513]

The acceptance of the gift was totally depended upon the Emperor's fancy and not only he accepted or returned gifts as per his likings but also demanded anything he liked. The ladies of the Mughal harem liked all the four hats brought by Sir Thomas Roe out of which one was his, so much that Jahangir demanded him to give him his hat as well.[514] There were occasions when the English ambassador had entered the imperial court without getting anything for Jahangir, so in order to remind him of the custom of the Mughal court, he would enquire him about the English dogs, and jewels of England, indicating the kinds of gift he would like to have from the English ambassador. About the jewels in England, Roe slyly to end the topic, commented that they were dearer than in Hindustan.[515]

The gifts brought to the Emperor, if not accepted were given back to the giver either plainly or as reward. Rup Khawass, the founder of Rupbas, presented the offering that he had prepared. 'That which pleased was accepted and what remained was given him back

[512] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 318-19.
[513] Thevenot & Careri, p. 237.
[514] Roe, p. 349
[515] Ibid., p. 394.

as a reward'.[516] Likewise, Khwaja Jahan on *Nauroz* presented his offering to Jahangir who had accepted whatever he approved of and the rest was returned to him as a reward.[517] Roe, on Jahangir's birthday, had presented him a book of maps which Jahangir accepted at that time but later sent him back, saying that no one could read or understand it.[518] The Mughal nobles too demanded disliked or rejected gifts given to them just as the Emperor. When Roe presented Jahangir a few pictures at *Diwan-i-Khas,* Asaf Khan after looking at the pictures, found some faults in them. Asaf Khan had returned a pair of English gloves presented to him by Roe as he found them to be of not much use.[519]

Gifts were not necessarily offered directly to the Emperor but to one of the royal members of the empire, seeking royal favour through him or her. E.g. Raja Budh Prakash of Sirmur wrote the *arzdashts* to Jahanara along with valuable gifts, requesting her to plead his case with Aurangzeb for settling his dispute with the Raja of Srinagar. Some of the things he sent to Jahanara included animals, basket of sour pomegranates, golden winged bird, musk-pods, falcon, boxes of snow, etc. Jahanara, in reply to his *arzdashts*, sent him *nishans*, granting him a *khilat* and assured him of her favours but complained that the musk was artificial and the snow was dirty.[520]

As per the Mughal gift-giving ceremony, there were primarily two important forms of gifts: *Peshkash* and *nazr*. These denoted the status of the Emperor which was much higher than the ones offering such forms of gift and accorded the giver an inferior position. Every time the Emperor received such forms of gift, his relationship i.e. of dominance and subjugation, with his men was reconfirmed. Any kind of negligence shown towards this ceremony connoted rupture in the relationship and the implication of the ceremony carried. The Mughal Emperor was the recipient of *peshkash* not only from his nobles, governors, local potentates, etc., but it was an obligation which was to be fulfilled even by his offspring. And this was offered by royal princes on important occasions like winning a battle, on the birth of his own son, on feasts and festivals and also to seek His Majesty's forgiveness and pacify his displeasure, *peshkash* was

[516] Ibid.., p. 349.
[517] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 166.
[518] Roe, p. 382.
[519] Ibid., p. 349.
[520] *Edicts from the Mughal Harem*, ed. S.A.I. Tirmizi, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1979, pp. xxx, xxxi.

presented by a rebelled prince. On hearing his royal father's brief march for Allahabad (though soon the Emperor had to call off the march) and the death of his grandmother, Hamida Banu Begam, the rebelled prince, Prince Salim went to Akbarabad and at the imperial court, presented a *peshkash*[521] of one diamond which was worth one lakh rupees and four elephants along with his *nazr*, comprising of 200 *muhrs* of 100 tolas, 4 *muhrs* of 50 tolas, 1 *muhr* of 25 *tolas*, several *muhrs* of 20 tolas, and 1 *muhr* of 5 tolas.[522]

The inappropriate *peshkash* given to the Emperor could also become a cause to punish his men to make him realize his offence. Accordingly Aurangzeb issued a royal *farman* stating Raja Jai Singh to go on a military expedition against the state of Bijapur 'in punishment for the default in *peshkash*, both past and present…'[523] Likewise, the Emperor had sent Dilir Khan to extract *peshkash* from the Rajas of Chanda and Deogarh. The Raja of Chanda, in his desperate attempt to seek the royal forgiveness, immediately gave a present of seven thousand *ashrafis* and five *lakh* of rupees for the Emperor and to Dilir Khan, he gave one thousand *ashrafis* and two thousand rupees. The Raja was also to pay one *crore* of rupees in cash and in kind within the span of two months 'in compensation (*jurmana*) for his past offences and out of gratitude for the present'[524] and his annual tribute to the Emperor was fixed at two *lakh* of rupees. He also had to pay five *lakhs* to Dilir Khan as a gift. As per the imperial instruction, Dilir Khan took Mulhari, the *diwan* of the Raja in his custody till the time the *peshkash* was not obtained. It was settled with the Raja of Deogarh that he would give a *peshkash* of fifteen *lakh* of rupees and an annual tribute of two *lakhs* to the imperial government.[525]

Before going on any military expedition, the Emperor at his court would bestow gifts on the person entrusted with the task. After the accomplishment of the campaign, again the Emperor would honour him with gifts and the person was to also offer gifts to the Emperor. When the Emperor Jahangir received Prince Khurram at his court at Mandu

[521] Abul Fazl in the *Akbar Nama* recorded that the *peshkash* of Prince Salim to his royal father consisted of a diamond worth one *lakh* of rupees, 209 *mohurs* of 100 *tolas*, 200 of 50 *tolas*, 4 of 25 *tolas* and 3 of 20 *tolas* each as *nazr* and 200 elephants as *peshkash* with a purpose to seek forgiveness for his misdemeanor. *Akbar Nama*, vol. III, tr., p. 1247.
[522] *Ma'asir-i-Jahangiri*, p. 33.
[523] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 221.
[524] Ibid., p. 237.
[525] Ibid., p. 238.

after his victorious expeditions in the Deccan, Prince Khurram on his return from the successful Mewar campaign had presented Jahangir '1,000 asharfis and 1,000 rupees as nazar and the same amount by way of alms'. The nobles too made their offerings to the Emperor.[526]

During the time of sieges too, in order to appease the imperialist and to reach an arrangement, *peshkash* was forwarded by the defending party. An illustrated copy of the *Bustan-i-Sa'di* of Shaikh Sa'di[527] prepared by Haji Mahmud under the patronage of Nasir Shah, the Khalji Sultan of Malwa (1500-1510 A.D.) which later travelled from Malwa to Ahmadnagar, was presented to Akbar by Bibi Pasand during the siege of Ahmadnagar. This piece of information can be found on the first page of the copy. The inscription mentions the giver of the copy as Bibi Pasand which in all probability is Chand Bibi of Ahmadnagar.[528] The giving of gifts was an acknowledgement of status difference. When the King of Golconda was sure of the imminent destruction of his kingdom, he sent valuable gifts to Aurangzeb and his ministers on a massive scale so as to mollify the Mughal Emperor and also signaled his readiness to accept the overlordship of the Mughals.[529] Gifts were also a peaceful means to accept one's subjugation without going on a war. The ruler of Assam along with those of Tipra and Kuch Behar regarded themselves as *chatar dhari*[530] and were able to retain their sovereignty even against the Mughal aggression. However, the Raja of Assam satisfied with the way Murshid Quli

[526] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 394.
[527] This illustrated copy of the *Bustan-i-Sa'di* is now in the National Museum at Delhi, obtained from Imre Schwaiger of Delhi sometime in 1948.
[528] Narinder Nath, 'Mandu Bustan', *National Museum Bulletin*, Nos. 4, 5 and 6, National Museum, 1983, New Delhi, pp. 122-4.
[529]Martin, vol. II, Part I, p. 1023.
[530] *Chatar* or umbrella was one of the important symbols of royalty for a Hindu ruler in India. Even the Buddha is sometimes shown with *chatar or chatr* to accentuate his royal lineage.
Chatr had its relevance in the times of the Delhi Sultanate as well. The author of the account, *A Fourteenth Century Arab Account of India under Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq*, was informed that Muhammad Bin Tughlag had seven umbrellas over his head and that when it comes to pomp and display of splendour of his audience hall and royalty, no one could be compared with him except for Alexander and Malik Shah bin Alap Arslan. While moving from one palace to the other, he rode a horse with an umbrella over his head. 'The *Silahdars* (royal body guards) were (moving) behind him with weapons in their hands. There were 12,000 slaves around the Sultan and all of them on foot. Only *Chitr bardar* (the carrier of royal umbrella), the *silahdars* and *Jamdars* (carriers of garments) were riding.' *A Fourteenth Century Arab Account of India under Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (Being English Translation of the Chapters on India from Shihab al-Din al-Umari's Masalik al absar fi-mamalik al-amsar)*, trs. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi and Qazi Mohammad Ahmad, Siddiqi Publishing House, Aligarh, 1971, p. 44.

Khan as the Deputy Nizam of Bengal Diwan of Bengal and Odisha was looking after the administration, sent him gifts such as chairs and palkis of ivory, musk, musical instruments, feathers, fans of peacock feathers, etc. along with tribute. The Raja of Kuch Behar too offered his gifts and tribute to the Khan. Thus gifts and tribute offered by them implied that they offered their submission. And thereafter, the offering of gifts and tribute became a tradition with them.[531]

Since there were Rajput rulers as *mansabdars* who were in constant and close contact with Mughals, therefore they adopted some of the Mughal practices. *Peshkash*[532] was one of them, for they recognized its economic utility and a meaningful tool to establish authority over the nobles as the amount to be paid was fixed by the ruler arbitrarily. The custom became so important among the Rajputs that in Marwar it was only after the payment of *peshkash* the successor was recognized.[533] And just as the Mughal Emperor demanded *nazr* from anyone (nobles, ambassadors, common people, etc.) on giving audience to them, the Rajput rulers too made *jagirdars*, officials and the people to pay some amount as *nazrana* on important ceremonies like royal marriages or the birth of a prince.[534] Later prominent Sikh rulers too had adopted *peshkash* and *nazar* in order to institute their relationship with their officials.[535]

Gift as a Ploy

When one of the sons of Aurangzeb, Akbar, had rebelled and took refuge at the court of the Persian Shah, Aurangzeb tried every way to get him back to Hindustan. One of them was to lure him through the means of gifts. Careri narrates, 'Whilst I was at *Ispahan*, some Eunuchs told me, they were sent by a certain *Omrah*, who Govern'd on the Borders of *Candahor*, with a Present of several thousand *Roupies* to this Prince, which he would

[531] *Riazu-s-Salatin*, p. 257.
[532] The custom was, however, not necessarily known by the term *peshkash*. The Marwar ruler, Maharaja Ajit Singh called it *Hukam Nama*. Sharma, Gian Chand Sharma, *Administrative System of the Rajputs*, Rajesh Publications, New Delhi, 1979, p. 114.
[533] Ibid., pp. 113-4.
[534] Ibid., p. 115.
[535] A diorama based on the painting titled *The Court of Lahore* (Dar Hof Van Lahore) by August Schoefft, an Austo-Hungarian painter, represents a *darbar* scene of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore. It depicts the Maharaja celebrating *Dussehra* festival with his courtiers who are seen offering gifts or *nazars* in the form of gold coins, gold *butiks* and horses decorated with golden trapping. The diorama is in the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Panorama at Amritsar.

not accept, and therefore they were going back with the Mony…I was afterwards inform'd by others, that this was a contrivance of *Aurenge Zeb*, who had order'd the *Omrah*, of whom *Akbar* had desir'd to borrow some thousand *Roupies*, to make him a Present of them, and to endeavour by fair means to draw him into *India* ; which Akbar understanding by means of his Sister, he refus'd the Present.'[536]

Norris on his way to receive the first audience with Aurangzeb was cautioned by one of the English gunners about the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb's cunning way of eliminating his enemies or suspicious figures. The English ambassador was told that 'the mughal never put anyone to death publicly, but whenever he had a mind to destroy anyone of whom he was suspicious or afraid he did it under the guise of friendship, declaring that the person had done him some great service, and must be rewarded with a *sarapa*, or robe of honour. This was so "strongly & artificially poysond under ye arms" that the first time a man wore it his death was certain. The gunner declared that Aurangzeb had killed several people recently in this manner.'[537] He also narrated a story by which Aurangzeb had planned to kill one local potentate by presenting a poisoned robe to him but the Raja escaped it by coming to the imperial court well attended by his men and by requesting the Emperor to present him the khilat which Aurangzeb was wearing. The Emperor in order to arouse no suspicion took off the robe and gifted it to the Raja. However, Norris found the whole idea of poisoned robe nothing more than a mere concoction of the English gunner. He writes, 'There is no doubt that gossip of all sorts was rife at the Emperor's Camp, and Aurangzib's occasional unscrupulous actions gave currency to fantastic tales such as that related by the English gunner.[538]

However another European too like that of an English gunner had talked about similar instances of deaths caused by poisoned robes. Francois Martin in his memoirs had recorded the case of Muhammad Ibrahim who was appointed by Aurangzeb as the governor of Golconda after the annexation of the territory. The Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Golconda ruler, Muhammad Ibrahim had played a vital role in the conquest of Golconda for the promised post of the governorship of the land. But within a

[536] Thevenot & Careri, p. 239.
[537] *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 297.
[538] Ibid., p. 297.

period of some weeks, he was shifted from the province of Golconda to Lahore. And the governor died on his way to the newly-assigned province. According to Francois Martin the repudiation of Muhammad Ibrahim from the governorship of such an important province of Golconda was a well-thought decision because Muhammad Ibrahim had known every nook and corner of the province and its people which was no less a threat for the Emperor. And so he was relocated to a far-flung region where he would have to start anew, though he was given no second chance to rebuild his base. The death was 'not entirely due to natural causes.'[539]

Gifts: A Means of Oppression

Gift-giving aided the Mughal Emperor in fulfilling a number of state ideologies. When the Emperor made many offerings of gifts and favours, it was obligatory for the nobles to return the favours by offering their lives for the imperial service. Hence, 'Double gifts, fourfold sacrifice'.[540] The ritual was instrumental in enforcing discipline in nobles. When a person received gifts from the Emperor, the recipient had to perform full salutations before receiving them. The connotations attached to the offering of the gifts by an inferior and his salutation kept the giver under the Emperor's subjugation. However the European accounts view the ceremony in a different light. Some of the European travellers believed that the refusal of the Emperor to accept gifts offered to him was a means to obtain more expensive ones. Consequently the provincial governors were oppressive and compelled the people of their assigned provinces to make really expensive offerings.[541]

Kavi Banarsidas, a Jain merchant from Jaunpur, later shifted to Agra and a poet who had witnessed the reigns of three Mughal Emperors, from Akbar's to that of Shah Jahan, testified that the demand of gifts from the Mughal Emperor created a pressure among the provincial governors to carry out the custom time and again and the governors in order to please the Emperor and outdo other governors would, in turn demanded some expensive

[539] *Memoirs of Francois Martin*, vol. II, Part I, pp. 1086-7.
[540] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, p. 284.
[541] Thevenot & Careri, p. 241.

gifts in the form of *nazr* from the rich inhabitants of their assigned province. And so, the offering of *nazr* became a means of oppression.

In 1598 Akbar had sent Chin Qilich Khan to Jaunpur. He was allotted Jaunpur as his *jagir*. On reaching there, he demanded a very large jewel from the jewellers there which they were not able to procure. The Khan had them incarcerated. Then one day, all of them were tied and brought to him, whipped till they were half-dead; and finally, released. Thereafter, the jewelers of Jaunpur with their families fled from there, only to return when Chin Qilich Khan was summoned back to Agra by Akbar. In the reign of Jahangir, in 1615 Agah Nur was sent to Jaunpur and Banaras and again the affluent class of the regions had to experience a similar ordeal as they had to in the times of Chin Qilich Khan. However, many of the rich residents had already left before his arrival. But those who were left had to bear the brunt of his anger. 'बिना किसी औचित्य के वहाँ के सभी जड़िया (रत्नजटित आभूषण विक्रेता), कोठीवाल, हुंडीवाल, सराफ, जौहरी और दलालों को पकड़ लिया। किसी को कोड़ो से पिटवाया, किसी के पैरों में बेड़ी डाल दी, किसी को अंधेरी काल कोठरी में बंद कर दिया।' After 40 days when he was called back, he set free all except for a few of them who were extremely rich. He took them along with him.[542] Mirza Qilich Khant's daughter was wedded to prince Daniyal and also he was appointed as the prince's *ataliq* (tutor). Thereafter, the Mirza was granted Jaunpur as his *jagir*. Now the matrimonial alliance with the royal family, the entrustment of such a high responsibility of being a tutor of one of the royal princes and the assignment of a *jagir* would have surely obliged the Mirza to show his utmost gratitude to the royal favours bestowed upon him. Giving gifts of enormous value to the Emperor was one of the ways of expressing one's gratefulness and also of use for further advancement. In the reign of Jahangir reign in 1615 Agha Nur was sent to Banaras and Jaunpur. Many jewellers and other rich men left the place as soon as they heard the news of the arrival of the Mughal noble. Those who were left, were imprisoned, whipped and tortured.[543]

[542] Ibid., pp. 16-7.
[543] Banarsidas, p. 17.

Owing to the obligatory presentation of gifts to the Emperor and the pressure to outdo other competitors in the gift-giving ceremony, his officials were always on look out to get hold of some exquisite, rare and really expensive items from any source. Since the Mughal Emperor was very fond of precious and semi-precious stones, therefore, it was generally merchants as well as jewellers who were meted out unfair treatment so as to extort the best and rarest gemstones from their collections. Therefore the prospect of enhancing one's station made such cases of extortion quite evident. Tavernier, a diamond merchant who had visited the court of Aurangzeb had noticed and referred to a custom which was 'very injurious to merchants who come from Europe and other places to sell jewels at the Court'.[544] He remarked that as soon as any merchant from a foreign land entered the Mughal domain, he was to be sent to the Emperor with all his goods. In case the merchant showed any sign of unwillingness to come to the court, the governor was instructed to exercise force. Tavernier informed that on reaching Surat in 1665, the governor had compelled him to visit the court. On reaching the court, before he could show to the Emperor the jewels he had brought, they were first examined by two Persians and a Banian. Out of the three, Nawab Aqil Khan was in charge of all the imperial precious stones. The task of Mirza Mu'azzam was to tax the product while Nihal Chand's duty was to detect any false jewels or any defect in them. The three would try to procure the exquisite piece for half its value from the merchant and later, presented it to the Emperor at a huge price. If the merchant happened to decline to do as they desired, they would later, when the piece was presented before the Emperor, devalue it. And once the Emperor had seen and refused to buy a precious stone, it was difficult for any merchant to sell the same to a prince or a noble because that meant the annihilation of the possibility to present the rejected piece to His Majesty ever again.[545] Therefore getting hold of precious stones was not merely a royal addiction but the consumption was infectious among the whole aristocratic circle, from the top to the bottom.

[544] Tavernier, vol. I, p. 110.
[545] Ibid., vol. I, p. 111.

Daily Routine of the Emperor

Abul Fazl gives a detailed description on the daily activities of Akbar.[546] Akbar altered his routine on only a few days during the whole span of his reign. The Jesuit Fathers at the court of Akbar noted that the Emperor was very particular about the royal duties and daily routines. He gave audience at least twice a day to his people and could hardly get time to sleep for more than three hours. The *jharoka* ceremony was the first royal ritual through which the Emperor interacted with his subjects every day:

showing himself at a window, from which he listened to all who sought speech with him. He had a wonderful memory. He knew the names of all his elephants, though he had many thousands of them, of his pigeons, his deer, and the other wild animals which he kept in his parks, and of all his horses to which names had been given. Each day, a certain number of these animals were brought before him for his inspection. He watched these from his window ; and as each animal passed him, its name and that of the person responsible for feeding it was read out to him. He noticed if it had grown fat, or become thin, and increased or decreased the salary of its keeper accordingly… After the lights had been lit, he used to sit in a great hall, surrounded by numerous people whose duty it was to read books to him, or narrate stories. Here, too, he received strangers, who came for the first time to his court, questioning them concerning their King or Prince, the nature of their country, customs, trade, and similar matters, and remembering all that they told him. Amongst other books which he had read to him was the life of our Saviour, which Father Xauier had composed in Persian ; for he had a great admiration for Jesus-Christ, of whom he always spoke with reverence, and whose images he treated with profound respect.[547]

Jahangir strictly followed his daily routine and even during his illness, he would not especially miss the *jharoka* ceremony.[548] He, in his memoirs, writes, "I have gone every day to the *Jharoka*, though in great pain and sorrow, according to my fixed custom."[549] Shah Jahan also abided by almost a similar pattern. Alamgir too followed the routine stringently.

Careri had recorded the manner in which Aurangzeb would undertake his daily activities:

[546]Ibid., vol. I, pp. 162-5.
[547] *Akbar & the Jesuits*, pp. 206-7.
[548] Roe, pp. 107-08. Bernier, p. 360.
[549]*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. II, p. 14.

> He had so distributed his time that he could scarce ever be said to be Idle. Some Days in the Week he bath'd before break of Day ; then having pray'd he eat something. After that having spent two hours with his Secretaries, he gave publick Audience again, when follow'd the third and fourth time of praying. Next he was employ'd in the Affairs of his Family till two Hours after it was Dark. Then he Supp'd and slept only two Hours, after which he took the *Alcoran* and read till break of Day. This was told me by several Eunuchs belonging to the Court who knowing their Prince was skill'd in Negromancy, believ'd he was assisted by the Devil in that Painful Course of Life ; else he could not have gone through so much fatigue in his decrepit old Age. This might serve as an Example to some Princes of *Europe*, who are so reserv'd, that they give Audience but twice a Week, and then will not stay a Moment to hear their Subject's Grievances ; as if it were not their duty to listen to them with Patience. And it is certain the *Mogul* did not feed on such Dainties as they do, but on Herbs and pulse ; fasting every Day at those Years, tho' made of Flesh and Blood like the *Europeans*.[550]

William Norris, the English ambassador to Aurangzeb had noticed that on Mondays, Aurangzeb would hold no *darbar* and also usually there were no public functions. Sundays and Thursdays were fixed for receiving public audiences. The accounts of Thevenot and Careri note that only on Fridays there would be no holding of the *durbar* at the *diwan-i-am*[551] while Manucci had observed that he would give audience every day: 'Each day he holds two audiences, where without distinction anyone can gain admission.'[552]

Aurangzeb like his predecessors would take all the pains to hold *durbar* religiously. In the year 1701 when Aurangzeb was occupied with the task of capturing the fortress of Parnala-garh, he fell down and dislocated his right knee. And in spite of his inability to walk owing to the pain, he continued to give audience in the *darbar*. 'But to conceal his infirmity as far as ever he can, before he appears on the throne to hold audience, he causes a curtain to be hung up in front, which is not withdrawn until he has taken his seat.

[550] Thevenot & Careri, pp. 235-36.
[551] Ibid., p. 240.
[552] *Storia*, vol. III, p. 249.

The same practice is followed in the Ghusl-khanah, the place where the second audience is held…'[553]

Holding of *durbar* became such an essential part of the Mughal kingship that if ignored, it had adequate potential to create a civil war in the Empire. The princess would embark on battles with one another and the nobles would start siding with the potential royal claimant to the Mughal throne. In November 1706, Aurangzeb owing to his ill health had not given audience for five days. This created an atmosphere of confusion and assumption that the Empire was not alive anymore. Immediately the nobles started to form alliances with any of the royal contenders. The sick Emperor, on being informed of the situation, had himself sat on a small throne supported up by some cushions and also by some men so that he sit properly and not fall. In this manner, he gave audience. The sound of musical instruments and the beating of the drums declared that the Emperor was giving audience and was not dead. Thus it ended the doubts and commotions which were spreading in the Empire.[554] It was in order to check rumour about the health and vigour of the Emperor, his appearance in daily *darbar* was indispensable.[555]

Though the failure to observe this ceremony had not proved catastrophic for the reign of Aurangzeb but his father's illness[556] disrupted his well-defined routine and resulted in a brutal civil war and the loss of his throne. Shah Jahan, on account of his illness, was unable to come for the *jharoka darshan* for some days which led to a lot of speculations in the whole empire. The royal princes, Shuja and Murad declared themselves as the successor of their father and started preparing for the war of succession. They, including Aurangzeb, marched towards the capital city, Agra. Meanwhile Aurangzeb through the means of treachery had captured Murad Bakhsh. He entered Agra on the pretext that his royal father was dead in spite of receiving several assurances from his father of his well-being through royal *farmans* and even though a personal meeting with his sister, Jahanara. In the end when Aurangzeb had cut the water supply to the fort, Shah Jahan out of desperation had sent his Grand Chamberlain, Fazil Khan to assure the prince that the

[553] Ibid. vol. III, p. 243.
[554] Ibid, vol. V, p. 259.
[555] John F. Richards, 'The Mughal Empire', ed. Zeenat Ziad, *The Magnificent Mughals*, Oxford University Press, 2002, Karachi, p. 11.
[556]Bernier, pp. 125 -126.

Emperor was alive and urged him to go back to his respective province; the Emperor would pardon his folly. But since Aurangzeb was very close to achieving his motive of usurping the power, he continued to insist that the Emperor was no more and that even if he was alive, he only wanted to see it for himself and pay his respects to the Emperor.[557] Thus the reign of Shah Jahan ended.

Diamonds and the Deccan

When a Rajput ruler was subjugated, he was subjected to receive *tika* from the Mughal Emperor. There was continuity in the Rajput tradition of kingship, only the 'actor' changed from a Rajput ruler to the reigning Mughal Emperor. But the scenario was totally different in the Deccan. The region was rich in diamond mines.[558] The Mughals would try to seize all the diamond mines[559] which were in the possession of local rulers of Hindustan. For long until the diamond mines of Africa were discovered Hindustan had been the sole producer of diamonds[560] in the entire world and the Golconda[561] mines were the most renowned for their best quality and the most magnificent weights. In spite of this, if we examine the portraits paintings of the Deccani rulers, who derived a huge source of revenue from the mines located here, we find that hardly they are shown embellishing their person with precious stones or especially holding a diamond in their

[557] Tavernier, vol. I, p. 273.

[558] From the sixteenth century onwards, the diamond mines of Hindustan had attracted European merchants like Francisco de Silveira, Ferna Jorge and the Venetian Bernardo de Nardona, etc. But the most notable of them all was Jean-Baptiste Tavernier.

[559] The mines from the Deccan have produced some of the world's most celebrated diamonds such as the 109 carat *koh-i-noor*, the 190 carat Orlov and the 69 carat dark blue Hope Diamond of Louis XIV. But by eighteenth century as the alluvial reserves of Golconda mines were exhausted, Brazil emerged as the major diamond producer until the 1870s. Thereafter there started the diamond rush and the mines were discovered in Hope town of Africa (1867), in Namibia (1908), Angola, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Congo, Guinea Central African Republic, Ivory Coast and Liberia, then in Kimberlite, Canada (1946), Russia (1953), Botswana (1967), Australia (1979), etc. Haritha Saranga and U. Dinesh Kumar, 'Performance Analysis of Indian Diamond Processing Industry using Data Envelopment Analysis', eds. G. Arulmozhi and R. Nadarajan, *Preceedings of the IInd National Conference on Mathematical and Computational Models*, Allied Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2003, p. 167.

[560] The current word 'carat' for measuring the weight of diamonds is borrowed from the term *kirat* which was the name of a small seed used in Hindustan. The weight of diamonds was determined through *kirat*. Usha R. Bala Krishnan, Meera Sushil Kumar, *Jewellery Traditions of India*, India Book House ltd., Bombay, 1999, p. 37.

[561] In the present day, the term 'Golconda' in the diamond trade market is synonymous with the variety of diamond which is rare and exceptional in its colour and transparency. The world's most celebrated and the legendary diamond, *Koh-i-noor*, 'Mountain of Light' is said to be from one of the mines of Golconda. Ibid., p. 33.

hands[562] as we frequently get to see in the portraits of the Mughal Emperors; instead they are often seen holding a flower. The Mughals not only seized and owned the diamond mines of the Deccan but they also had the reigning Emperor's name and their ancestors' names inscribed on them as they passed from one reign to the next just as manuscripts from the imperial libraries had the impression of the royal seal of the reigning Emperor and when they came into the possession of the succeeding Emperor, they immediately received the marking of the imperial seal. Therefore royal inscriptions on precious stones and royal seal impressions on manuscripts from the royal libraries were a means of legitimizing their rule, accentuating that the Mughals were not accidental rulers but they had a long tradition of kingship which they had inherited from their predecessors. The Emperors were acquiring the best and the rarest of the world and generating and leaving rich expressions of symbols with regard to their proprietorship over them. Indeed, this was a conscious effort to create and maintain traditions pertaining to kingship and certainly they had been enormously successful in the effort.

Also, the germaneness of such precious stones lies not simply in its 'physical makeup' but in 'its history as an artifact of conquest'.[563] Possessing the grandest and the costliest rarities was not solely significant; equal in significance was the source from where it was occupied. The precious stones had multiple layers of symbolisms associated with them. They served by 'defining roles in the functioning of the hierarchy of authority' and they 'made visually explicit the status of the leading actors'.[564] They established and portrayed relations of submission and dominance.

After the successful outcome of the diplomatic mission Akbar had sent to the court of Bijapur in 1603, he especially demanded from the rulers of the Deccan, viz., Bijapur, Golconda, Bidar, and the Carnatic to submit their rare precious stones.[565] The demand of precious stones was not by any means arbitrary. The surrender of precious stones by the

[562] Navina Najat Haidar and Marika Sardar, *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500-1700, Opulence and Fantasy*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2015, p. 325.
[563] Danielle C. Kinsey, 'Koh-i-Noor: Empire, Diamonds, and the Performance of British Material Culture', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
[564] Grahame Clark, *Symbols of Excellence, Precious Materials as Expressions of Status*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p. 93.
[565] *Wikaya-i-Asad Beg*.

rulers of the said Deccan kingdoms would have implied their submission to the Mughal authority. Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan in accordance with the imperial order of Jahangir had sent an army under the command of his son Amru-llah to Gondwana to capture the diamond mine of Barakar which was under the ownership of Panju, a zamindar of Khandesh. The zamindar on hearing this dreadful news and knowing his inability to fight against the Mughal army, without putting up any resistance had given it to the Mughal Emperor. Jahangir had regarded the diamonds obtained from the mine as 'superior in kind and beauty to all other kinds of diamonds, and much esteemed by jewelers. They are of good shape, and larger, and superior.' He further informed the second best mine located at Kokhra, on the borders of Bihar and here the diamonds were procured not from the mine but from a river and that this was also in the possession of the Mughal Empire. The third best mine was in the province of the Karnatic (Carnatic).[566]

When the rulers of the Deccan were defeated, they would send objects signifying their willingness to submit to the Emperor. After Qutub-ul-mulk was defeated by prince Khurram, he had sent to the imperial court a diamond ring worth 1,000 muhars. Jahangir had emphasized in his memoirs, 'This diamond had been sent, as it reckoned one of the marvels of the world.'[567] Qutb-ul-Mulk was in possession of a huge diamond, weighing 188 *ratis*, procured from a mine of Golconda. An imperial order was sent to him to send it to the Mughal court which the ruler of Golconda obliged. The diamond was believed to be worth two *lakhs* of *huns*[568] (*pagodas*), equivalent to Qutb-ul-Mulk's annual tribute to the Mughal Emperor.[569]

Clothing

In the aristocratic circle, 'Cloth and colour make the man of honour'[570] as they carried symbolic functions and were indicator of bond, of camaraderie, of hierarchy and of inclusion and exclusion. Therefore they were one of 'the codes for reading society'.[571] In

[566] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. II, pp. 21-22.
[567] Ibid., vol. II, p. 8.
[568] 10,000 *huns* were equal to 40,000 rupees. *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 65.
[569] Ibid., p. 404.
[570] Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing, Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*, tr. Jean Birrell, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1994, p. 10.
[571] Ibid., p. 33.

order to expand the kinship base, the giving or exchange of material objects implied "the closeness of 'fictive' kin relationship".[572] Each kind of object exchanged had its own rich vocabulary of metaphors and representations, representing and articulating royal authority. [573] Among Rajputs, the custom of swapping turbans called *pagri badal bhai* instantly made them (the people involved in the exchange) brothers, for according to Rajput beliefs, head was deemed to be the basis of male fertility and prowess. In the words of Norman P. Ziegler in his work *'Action, Power and Service in Rajasthani Culture: A Social History of the Rajputs of Middle Period Rajasthan'* for a Rajput the head was 'considered to be the reservoir of stored semen, the 'Lord and Master' of the body, the storage center of the nectar which dripped down the throat and was caught by the sun inside the belly at the point of the umbilicus, keeping the body warm and giving it its vital energy.'[574] Through the custom of exchange of ceremonial object or 'coded substance', the two men merged their semen and as an outcome of which they became brothers having the same potency and vigour.[575] Apart from cohesion reflected through certain kinds of clothing, it also exhibited one's status vis-à-vis others. When Humayun was at the court of Shah Tahmasp, he had to wear the Persian cap[576] which earlier he had refused to wear. The Shah instructed Humayun by saying, "you must put on the Persian cap". Considering the situation Humayun was in, he had to oblige, answering, "that a Taj (crown) is an embless of greatness ; I will with pleasure wear it."[577]

The Mughal court was a collection of men, from the Emperor to his nobles, adorned with rare and expensive jewels and clothes. The ambassadors coming to the court and the European contemporary writers, awestruck especially by the rich collection of royal

[572] Norbert Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India*, Cambridge University Press, First South Asian Edition 2006, p. 32.
[573] Philip Wagoner, based on his study of Vijaynagar courtly dress and the grant of royal Arabic titles, postulates that the measures of absorption of Islamic forms by the Vijaynagar rulers which he called 'Islamicization' were deliberate in order to make themselves materially agreeable to Muslim traders with the purpose to facilitate its trade networks and that it does not imply the incorporation of Islamic ideology. Jennifer Howes, *The Courts of Pre-Colonial South India: Material Culture and Kingship*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2003, p. 44.
[574] Peabody, p. 32.
[575] Ibid., p. 32.
[576] It was of a high conical shape, divided into twelve sections, denoting the twelve Imams. Earlier it was worn by the kings of Persia, later the Persian officials and soldiers too started wearing it. *The Tazkereh al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun, written in the Persian Language by Jouher*, p. 64.
[577] Ibid., p. 64.

jewels and their use in royal attires, had enthusiastically narrated the magnificent sight which was presented to them. Sir Thomas Roe had given the description of the way Jahangir was fully bedecked in jewels when the Emperor had departed from Ajmer to his camp:

> On one side of (turban) hung an unset ruby, "as big as a wall nut" and, on the other a big diamond. His sash was wreathed about with chains of great pearls, rubies and diamonds, all drilled. He also wore a necklace of excellent pearls, three double. ("so great I never saw"). At his elbow were armlets sets with diamonds and on his wrist three rows of different set of pearls. His hands were bare, but every finger was decorated with a ring. His English gloves were struck under his girdle. His coat was of cloth of gold, sleeveless, and hung upon a fine "sinabaf" which was "as thin as a lawn". On his feet were a pair of embroidered bucking, which were also studded with pearls. Its toes were sharp and turned up.[578]

Edward Terry, chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe, too observed the opulent manner in which the Mughal Emperor adorned his person and remarked, 'there is never a monarch in the whole world that is daily adorned with so many jewels, as he himself is.'[579] He added: 'The diamonds, rubies and pearls worn by him were of extraordinary greatness and of exceedingly big value. He also bedecked himself with long chains of jewels, which hung about his neck, wore them about his wrist and fingers, and studded his swords and daggers with them.'[580]

Shah Jahan in several Mughal miniature paintings is shown richly attired. Aurangzeb unlike his predecessors was particular about not wearing very expensive jewels and ostentatious clothes whether at the court or outside it. He would be often seen plainly dressed in white. He would admonish his courtiers on finding them wearing too costly and flamboyant jewels and clothes.[581] Once a Kashmiri trader had got the Emperor a coat

[578] Roe, p. 322.
[579] Edward Terry, p. 373.
[580] Ibid., p. 375.
[581] Seid-Gholam Hossein-Khan, *The Seir Mutaqherin or Review of Modern Times: Being an History of India containing in general the reigns of the Seven Last Emperors of Hindostan*, vol. IV, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1926, rep. 1990, p. 139.

made of very rich gold thread with some *Quranic* words embroidered on it. Aurangzeb, though very pleased by the work, yet chose not to buy it on account of its very high price, saying 'he had made a vow never to wear costly clothes, nor was he worthy to wear on his body such holy words, miserable sinner as he was'.[582] When the trader tried selling the same coat to the Emperor's son, Shah Alam, he too replied in a similar fashion. Finally, he sold it to the *Wazir*, Jafar Khan at a much lower price who on the eve of the festival of the Sacrifice went to the court wearing the coat. Spotting him donning the coat so expensive, he said, 'You seem to be better off than I am.' To which, the Wazir replied, 'I have expended all I possessed in the purchase of this coat; to the end that by clothing myself in such holy words, they may wash me clean of my sins and furnish me with all the intelligence and capacity required to serve your majesty efficiently.'[583]

The Mughal costume trends followed at the court would also become a vogue in the provinces of the empire. Many clothing and decorative items used by the Mughal Emperors were adopted by the subordinated Rajput rulers. Of those, the robes of honour especially the gift of *saropa* gradually popular among the Rajas of Marwar because of the symbolic connotation attached to it. They would send the zamindars of Marwar and their sons saropa on the eve of their weddings.[584] The museums in Rajasthan display objects like *sarpech*, *turra*, etc. which were a part of royal attire. Mota Raja Udai Singh in a painting is seen in a get-up which reflected Mughal influence on the Rajasthani style of clothing. He is shown wearing long robes, tight trousers and a turban.[585] From the study of an illustrated manuscript of the Dhola-Maru in the National Museum at New Delhi by Mr. O. P. Sharma, the Deputy Keeper (Paintings), it is revealed that the costumes worn by the male figures were similar to those in fashion in the Mughal court during the reigning years of Akbar. The costumes which the figures are shown wearing are the four-pointed (*chakdar*) and diaphanous *jama*, short and narrow *patka* and the tightly bound (*atpati*) turban. In the time of Jahangir, the fashion in clothes in the court continued to be

[582] *Storia*, vol. III, pp. 253-54.
[583] Ibid., vol. III, p. 254.
[584] सुखसिंह भाटी, *'राजस्थान के परंपरागत वस्त्र-परिधान'*, महाराजा मानसिंह पुस्तक प्रकाश शोध केंद्र, जयपुर, २००८, पृ॰ ४० ।
[585] V.S. Bhargava, *Marwar and the Mughal Emperors: 1526-1748*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1966, p. 176.

similar as in the days of his father; the only perceptible change was in the mode of wearing a turban. Earlier it was a tightly bound turban, now it became a loosely bound one. And the turbans worn during Shah Jahan's period consisted of a band. Hence, on the basis of the costumes of the characters including the stylistic ground, he attempts to fix the date of the manuscript, i.e. in about 1630 A.D. and that through the study of the Rajasthani paintings, he further postulated that even after a certain Mughal costume in the imperial court was not in use any longer, it remained a trend in Rajasthan for an extended period.[586]

Feasts

Feasts can be transformed to symbolic power or cultural capital from economic capital.[587] Grand feasts were held on several significant regal occasions such as coronations, birthdays of the Emperor and princes, weddings, festivals, etc. during the reigns of Babur and Humayun, feasts were often held outdoors. Gardens were the typical venue for such occasions. Babur had thrown many parties as well as attended those arranged by the local grandees either at gardens like Bagh-i-safed, Bagh-i-Jahanara, etc. or on the banks of a river. Humayun had ordered for a magnificent celebration for his son Akbar's circumcision ceremony in a huge garden, *Suret Khane*.[588]

The etiquette observed at such gatherings was subjected to change as per the changing circumstances. Rules were placid, and not rigid. In 1506 at Heart, Babur attended a feast organized by Badi'uzzaman Mirza. As Babur had more of a camaraderie kind of relationship with his men and the protocols and rules were not strictly formal, therefore, he had granted 'blanket' consent to consume liquor to his men.[589] By the period of Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor was completely in charge of who could partake of liquor in the royal presence and also within his realm the making and the selling of 'wine or

[586] O. P. Sharma, 'An Illustrated Manuscript of the Dhola-Maru', *National Museum Bulletin*, Nos. 4,5 and 6, pp.118-120.
[587] Drike Van Der Veen, 'When is Food a Luxury?', *World Archaeology*, vol. 34 (3), Taylor & Francis Ltd., 2003, p. 414.
[588] *The Tezkereh al Vakiat*, p. 84.
[589] *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, p. 229.

rice-spirit (*darbahra*)' was made unlawful immediately after he ascended the throne.[590] It is interesting to observe that how on one hand, the Emperor who would not drink (Babur till this time at least had not taken to drinking) could not prevent his men from drinking in his presence whereas on the other hand, we have another Emperor who was a complete drunkard and yet was in full command of who could drink in his presence.

In the times of Babur since the concept of hierarchy was not starkly marked, therefore Babur and the host of a party along with a few important men would sit together on the same carpet or cushions. In one of the parties, hosted by Muzaffar Mirza, the younger brother of Badi'uzzaman, Babur sat on the same cushion as that of the host while the other two guests, Sultan-Mas'ud Mirza and Jahangir Mirza shared the other cushion. The formalities, though, were not very rigid in the times of the nascent phase of the empire, yet in no way convivial gatherings lacked in lavishness. Badi'uzzaman Mirza was known for his lavish and elaborate parties 'that lacked nothing' and therefore, his parties were much talked about. Babur himself had attended some when he was at Herat. Babur had noticed that even in one of Mirza's parties which was not convivial in nature, dishes were served in gold and silver vessels and there were varieties of food 'of every description: roast fowl, goose, and much more.'[591]

Khankhanan's *dastarkhwan* (a lavish ceremonial dining spread) was a very elaborate one and never closed for anyone. Thousands flocked to his place to dine. It is worthy to note the manner in which the assembled people sat for dining. They always took their seats according to their ranks. Food, thus, was also used as a means of distinction apart from displaying magnanimity.[592] Shaikh Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami Fahami was too noted for his lavish food habits. His son, Abdu-r Rahman, was his *safarchi*, 'table attendant'. The mashrif-i-bawarchikhana, 'superintendent of the kitchen' would stand by. Whatever Fazl had eaten twice was again made next day. During his Deccan operations, every day he had food served to approximately one thousand officials. He also had *khichdi* prepared

[590] Prohibition on the production and sale of liquor or intoxicating drug was one of the twelve imperial orders Jahangir had issued as soon as he became the Emperor. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 8.
[591] *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, p. 224.
[592] *अकबरी दरबार*, तीसरा भाग, पृ॰ ३९८ ।

and distributed to anyone who wanted it.[593] But no matter how elaborate and lavish a noble's *dastarkhwan* was, especially from the time of Akbar's reign, the imperial dining spread was matchless in its superior value and magnitude.[594] Besides, the Emperor had no set time to take his food. Still whenever he wished to eat, several dishes were served to him within one hour of getting the royal order.[595]

The Mughal Emperor through the means of rules and regulations with respect to the celebrations of festivities and feasts tried to exercise a greater influence on his men. From the birth to death, in all the major life-crisis events of a person and rituals associated with them, the Mughal Emperor had a prominent function in them. When a prince is born or a son was born to a noble, the name of the child was kept by the Emperor. Man Singh's sister gave birth to a son. Akbar named him Khusrau.[596] Aurangzeb's son was born in 1639 and Shah Jahan had named the infant Muhammad Sultan. On 13 October 1644 Dara Shikoh had a son by the daughter of Sultan Parvez and the newborn baby was called Sultan Sipihr Shikoh by the Emperor, Shah Jahan. Likewise, in 1645 through a letter from Prince Muhammad Shah Shuja who was stationed at Bengal as the governor of the province there, the Emperor was informed of the birth of his (Shuja's) son by the daughter of the Kishtwar Raja. The scion of royalty was named Sultan Buland Akhtar by his royal grandfather. Before this in 1639 Shuja had a baby boy who was given the name of Sultan Zain al-Din Muhammad.[597] Bakhshiulmulk Sadruddin offered *nazr* and *arzdasht* to Aurangzeb, reporting the birth of a male child to him.[598]

He would fix the marriages for the princes as well as for his nobles and their sons. In 1594 Akbar chose Mihrunnisa, the daughter of Itimad-ud-daulah, as a wife for one of his men named Ali Quli Khan Istajlu. Some historians are of the opinion that the marriage of Ali Quli Khan was arranged by the Emperor as a reward for the young and energetic soldier who had served Abdur Rahim *Khan-i-Khanan* in his campaign of the Sind

[593] *Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. I, p. 127.
[594] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 60.
[595] Ibid., vol. I, p. 59.
[596] *अकबरी दरबार*, तीसरा भाग पृ॰ १९३ ।
[597] *Shah Jahan Nama*, pp. 262, 317, 327, 334.
[598] *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the Rulers of Jaipur*, vol. I, p. 140.

exceptionally well.[599] Jahangir ordered Shah Nawaz Khan to give his daughter in marriage to the son of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan.[600] Marriages of any nobles or his kinsmen could not take place without the approval of the Emperor. When Mahabat Khan arranged the marriage of his daughter to the son of a Naqshbandi saint, Khwaja Barkhurdar without the consent of Jahangir, the infuriated Emperor as a way of punishment had the noble's son-in-law incarcerated.[601]

On the death of a noble, his property was to be confiscated and sent to the royal treasury. For condolence he would either go personally or send his son to the family of the deceased.[602] It is also interesting to note that on the one hand, we have the ladies of the Mughal harem well-guarded and kept away from the gaze of men who were not their relatives and on the other hand, the royal princes were wedded to a number of daughters of prominent elites. For the royal princesses, there could be no suitable match; a wedding of a royal princess could have only meant an additional threat to the Emperor. In the garb of imbibing local tradition concerning marriage, i.e., the tradition of hypergamy practiced among the Rajputs, the real political intention was concealed efficiently. On the eve of the festival, *Khush roz*, the ladies of the harems of his nobles were sent to the imperial palace. Some were chosen by the Emperor to indulge in sexual revelry.[603] James Tod, a British East India officer, reports:

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[599] Ellison Banks Findly, *Nur Jahan, Empress of Mughal India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1993, p. 14.

[600] *Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 836.

[601] *Ma'asir-i-Jahangiri*, pp. 23, 47-8.

[602] The customary visit to the son of a deceased noble was prevalent among Kachhawahas as well and it was called '*Matami'* and through this practice of paying visit on such an occasion, hierarchy of nobles was kept intact, for the nobles who were placed at lower rung of the court hierarchy, had to come to a camp at Jaipur for the purpose whereas the important nobles received the chief at their place. Shyam Singh Ratnawat, *Rajput Nobility (With special reference to the Kachhawaha Nobility of Jaipur during 1700-1858 A.D.)*, Panchsheel Prakashan, Jaipur, 1991, p. 159.

[603] A somewhat similar remark is found in the account of a Scottish captain, privateer and merchant, Alexander Hamilton about the Shah of Persia, Shah Tahmasp. He wrote: 'And when the King has a Mind for fome new Concubines, he iffues out Orders for all Men and Youths to depart out from their Houfes in the Street, that he is pleafed to vifit, and to leave all the Ladies in Poffeffion till his Majefty furveys them ; and the Penalty of Difobedience is Death. He generally makes his Progrefs thro' the *Armenian* Quarters, becaufe the faireft and moft beautiful are amongft their Children.' *A New Account of the East-Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Alexander Hamilton from the years 1688 to 1723, Trading and Travelling by Sea and Land, to Most of the Countries and Islands of Commerce and Navigation, Between the Cape of Good-Hope and the Island of Japan*, vol. I, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, rep. 1995, p. 112.

> It is not New Year's Day, but a festival especially instituted by Akbar, and to which he gave the epithet Khooshroz, 'day of pleasure', held on the 9th day (no-roza)… But the Khooshroz was chiefly marked by a fair held within the precincts of the court, attended only by females. The merchants' wives exposed the manufactures of every clime, and the ladies of the court were the purchasers… These '9th day fairs' are the markets in which Rajpoot honour was bartered…
>
> Yet there is not a shadow of doubt that many of the noblest of the race were dishonoured on the 'Noroza'…[604]

Bernier had also taken notice of such fairs and debauchery during the time of Shah Jahan's reign and he recorded that the Emperor had instituted such fairs 'at every festival, though not always to the satisfaction of some the *Omrahs'*.[605]

Festivals were not celebrated merely for merry-making but for the Emperor they were the opportunities to put his power into effect over his men. Clearly, the Emperor endeavoured to obtain total submission of his men. The ones attempting to resist were punished. Pietro Della Valle informs that before Jahangir had married Nur Jahan and had made her his lawful wife, he only had the intention of making her one of his concubines in his harem. But when she declined the imperial favour, insisting the Emperor to take her as his lawful wife, Jahangir chose to fix her marriage to a *halalkhor*, 'that is to whom it is lawful to eat every-thing, and for this cause they were accounted the most despicable people in *India*' with the motive to cause disgrace to her and her family.[606]

The custom of having the Emperor's consent in marriage of his nobles and their kinsmen and even at times selecting a suitor for their marriage is surely an indication of the Emperor's eagerness to exercise mighty power over his men. But then no matter whatever channels of power are exploited, no power is absolute. Where there is power,

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[604] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, pp. 274-5.

[605] Bernier had recorded another category of women who were admitted to the royal seraglio in such fairs. They were known by the term *Kanchens* and were elegant and skilled female singers and dancers. They belonged to honourable class. They also visited the Emperor on Wednesdays to offer their respect at the imperial *durbar* and it was then the Emperor 'often detained them the whole night, and amused himself with their antics and follies'. Bernier, pp. 273-4.

[606] Pietro Della Valle, pp. 53-4.

there is also dissention. And it is in this light we come across the sole incident in the Mughal history of the glorious phase of the Empire that a noble had dared to put a grand Mughal Emperor into his custody with the aid of his Rajput soldiers. The author of the *Ma'asir-i-Jahangiri*, Khwaja Kamgar Husaini attributes the rebellion of Mahabat Khan to the imperial action of incarcerating the son-in-law of Mahabat Khan as the Emperor had resented the marriage which took place between the noble's daughter and Khawaja Barkhurdar without his permission.[607]

And just as the Mughal Emperor had employed means of protocols and rituals to keep his men under subjugation, similarly there were contenders who had made use of the same so as to validate their contention. One such example is that during the course of Maharana Pratap Singh's continuous resistance against the Mughal rule, the Rana had initially agreed to bow down before the Mughal sovereignty on the condition that he was exempted from coming in person to the Mughal *durbar* for the *tika* ceremony. However Akbar insisted on the personal attendance of the Rana at his court. Since the coming of the Rana to the Mughal court for the ceremony was an act of utter shame, therefore, he did not go. Akbar sent his men under the command of Raja Man Singh to invade the territory of the Rana and bring him to the court. The Rana who had earlier received all the Mughal envoys courteously and also entertained them, put on the royal *khilat* and once even sent his eldest son to Agra for the purpose of negotiation, now for the same Rana, dining with the Rajput Raja was a matter of dishonour.

म्लेच्छेन साकं मिलनं न कुर्या—

मिति प्रतिज्ञां स्वपितुः सुरक्षन्।

चक्रे न वायं मिलनं च सेहे

अनेककालावधिविदृर तत्॥[608]

[607] *Ma'asirr-i-Jahangiri*, p. 48

[608] Ranchor Bhat, 'Amarkavya', ed. Devilal Paliwal, *Maharana Pratap Smriti Granth*, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth Sahitya Sansthan, Udaipur, 1969, p. 27.

The above stanza in the *Amarkavya*[609] describes that Maharana Udai Singh had taken a pledge that he would never form any alliance with *mlecchas*[610] (referring to the Mughals here). His son, Maharana Pratap Singh too took a similar vow. Clearly, the use of the term *mleccha* for the Mughals in the above verse was to emphasize that the Mughals on account of being foreigners were not the rightful ruler of Hindustan, thus substantiating and legitimizing the struggle of the Rana against the Mughals and their supporters. In accordance with this line of notion, before the Battle of Haldighati when Raja Man Singh had come to meet Rana Pratap Singh to persuade the Rana to submit, the Rana declined to dine with Raja Man Singh, for the Raja served the Mughal Emperor and so for the Rana, eating with him would be enough to pollute the Mewar ruler. On learning this, the furious Raja returned to the imperial court, only to meet again the Rana on the battlefield at Khamnar. [611]

म्लेच्छेशमानीय गृहेथ तस्मै

कन्यां प्रयच्छंति कलत्रदोला॥

अथार्पयंत्येव सुखेन लब्ध्यै

जवराति तृप्त्यै।

ये कच्छवाहादिनृपा अनच्छा--

स्तान्मानयंत्यत्र पवित्रवीराः॥

न राणावंश्याः किमु भोजनानि

कुर्वन्ति तैः साकमिमे कथंचित्।[612]

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[609] *Amarkavya* was written by Ranchor Bhatt during the reign of Maharana Amar Singh II (1755—67) but it could not be completed because of the writer's death.

[610] *Mleccha* was a term used for barbarians, foreigners, and the Indian outcastes. The Gazetteer of India says that below the Sudras were placed the degraded races called the *mlecchas*.

[611] Ranchor Bhat, 'Rajprashasti', ed. Devilal Paliwal, *Maharan Pratap Smriti Granth*, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth Sahitya Sansthan, Udaipur, 1969, p. 21. Ranchor Bhat wrote *Rajprashasti* during the reign of Maharana Raj Singh (1709-37).

[612] 'Amarkavya', p. 32.

On enquiring about the reason for such a conduct by the Rana, he was informed by one of his men that the Rajput chiefs like Kachhwahas, engaged in matrimonial alliances with the Mughal Emperor, were considered as polluted by the rulers of Mewar. And therefore, the Rana was not willing to dine with him.

प्रक्षालनं भूरिविलेपनं च

पवित्रमृत्स्ना शुचिगोमयैश्च।

अत्राथ गंगाजलसेकमुच्चैः

पाकं ततः कारयति स्म तत्र ॥

कृत्वा ततः पुण्यदवैश्वदेवं

कुलीनवीरैः सहितोतिकाले।

मुदाकरोत् भोजनमत्र राणा—

प्रतापसिंहः प्रचुरप्रतापः॥[613]

After Man Singh had left, Rana immediately had the kitchen sanctified by Ganga water and ordered for making a new one. And thereafter, he dined with his men to have food.

Another Sanskrit *mahakavya* called *Raj Ratnakar*, written by Pandit Sadashiv during the period of Maharana Raj Singh I, mentions the same reason for the Rana's rejection to dine with Raja Man Singh and the same reaction after the Raja left.

समक्षत्रया महति राजकुले प्रजाता

[613] Loc. cit.

नो भं जते यवनसंगवता सहैते॥[614]

Pratap had the whole place consecrated with Ganga water and was rubbed using cowdung. He ordered the utensils to be thrown away.

However on one side there was a strong resistance put up by the Rana of Mewar who was not willing to personally come to the imperial *darbar* for the *tika* ceremony, on the other, there were men who come to pay their respects even to the ceremonial objects of the Emperor traversing from one place to another. The ceremonial objects representing the Emperor were revered, making the royal presence possible even in the absence of his person. When Abul Fazl's brother, Shaikh Faizi was appointed as the ambassador to the ruler of Bijapur, Ibrahim Adil Shah, he was carrying a letter addressed to the Bijapur ruler as well as some other ceremonial objects. His tent had two chambers and it was in the second or in the innermost one, there was placed the royal throne with all its royal paraphernalia such as the gold-embroidered cushion, the royal sword, the dresses of honour and an imperial letter were kept on the throne, over which the velvet canopy, embellished with gold was fixed. Around the throne were men standing with folded hands. When he reached Burhanpur, the local visitors like Raja Ali Khan with his men and the *vakil* and magistrate of the Deccan approached the innermost chamber with a lot of reverence and in the manner akin to the one observed at the imperial court. In his letter to His Majesty, Faizi had written:

> When they entered the second chamber, and saw the royal throne at some distance from them, they saluted it, and advanced with bare feet. When they arrived at a certain distance, they were directed to stand and make three salutations, which they did most respectfully, and continued standing in the place. I then took the royal letter in both hands, and calling him a little nearer, said, "His Majesty, the viceregent of God, has sent your highness to royal orders, with the greatest condescension and kindness, —this is one." On this, he took the letter and put it on his head respectfully, and saluted it three times. I then said, "His Majesty has bestowed on your highness a dress of honour." Upon this he bowed, kissed it, and bowed again. In the same way he did homage for the sword, and bowed every time Your Majesty's name was mentioned.' Right after the conclusion of the audience, 'He then went and stood respectfully in his place

[614] 'Raj Ratnakar Mahakavya', *Maharana Pratap Smriti Granth*, p. 10.

> at the edge of the carpet opposite the throne. The royal horses were there. He kissed the reins, placed them on his shoulder and saluted them. He then took his departure. My attendant counted and found that he made altogether 25 salams. He was exceedingly happy and contended. When he first came in he said, "If you command me, I am ready to make 1000 salams in honour of His Majesty I am ready to sacrifice my life for him." [615]

Thus through the study of rituals performed at the court we can infer that political power is not exclusively territorial and that even when the actual physicality of the court is not present, yet the regal power could be asserted through the formalities observed at the imperial court. The recipient of the imperial order and gifts was to execute the exact impeccable order of darbar etiquette as performed at the Mughal court. The court ambience had to be successfully realized once the norms were set at the court through the repeated performance of the actions. We also see rituals 'elicited fierce competition'.[616] And it is because of the polarities and the transforming capability of the rituals and ceremonials performed at the court that the state ideologies were realized to such a degree that many wanted to be associated with the court and saw it as a matter of pride and honour:

> बादशाह का दरबार भी ईश्वर के यहाँ की अदभूत वस्तुओं का संग्रहालय था। अमीर और सरदार वहाँ से रत्नओं की पुतलियाँ बनकर निकलते थे। इसके साथी देखते थे और रह जाते थे। मन में कहते थे कि इसका पिता भी किसी दिन जिसे चाहता था, उसे रत्नों और मोतियों में छिपा देता था। भला ईश्वर करे कि लड़का उस प्रकार के पुरस्कार पाने वाले लोगों में ही सम्मिलित हो जाय। उस ईश्वर में सब सामर्थ्य है। यदि वह चाहे तो फिर वही तमाशा दिखला सकता है।[617]

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[615] Waq*i'at of Shaikh Faizi*, PHI Persian Literature in Translation, the Packard Humanities Institute, http://persian.packhum.org/persian//. The work, containing a series of letters written to Akbar, was translated by Lieutenant Prichard for Sir H. M. Elliot.

[616] David Mc Mullen, 'Bureaucrats and Cosmolgy: the Ritual Code of T'ang China', eds. David Cannadine and Simon Price, *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992. p. 222.

[617] *अकबरी दरबार*, तीसरा भाग, पृ॰ २२७ ।

Figure 3.1

Timur Watching Animal Fights, Gouache on paper, Mughal, 17th c.
Exhibition: 'A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings and Sculptures from the Bharany Donation' / 'Parkhi Nazar', 11 July-10 Sept. 2014
National Museum, New Delhi

Figure 3.2

Babur Watching Wrestlers, painted by Banwari Khurd, 1598 A.D.

Exhibition: 'A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings and Sculptures from the Bharany Donation' / 'Parkhi Nazar', 11 July-10 Sept. 2014
National Museum, New Delhi

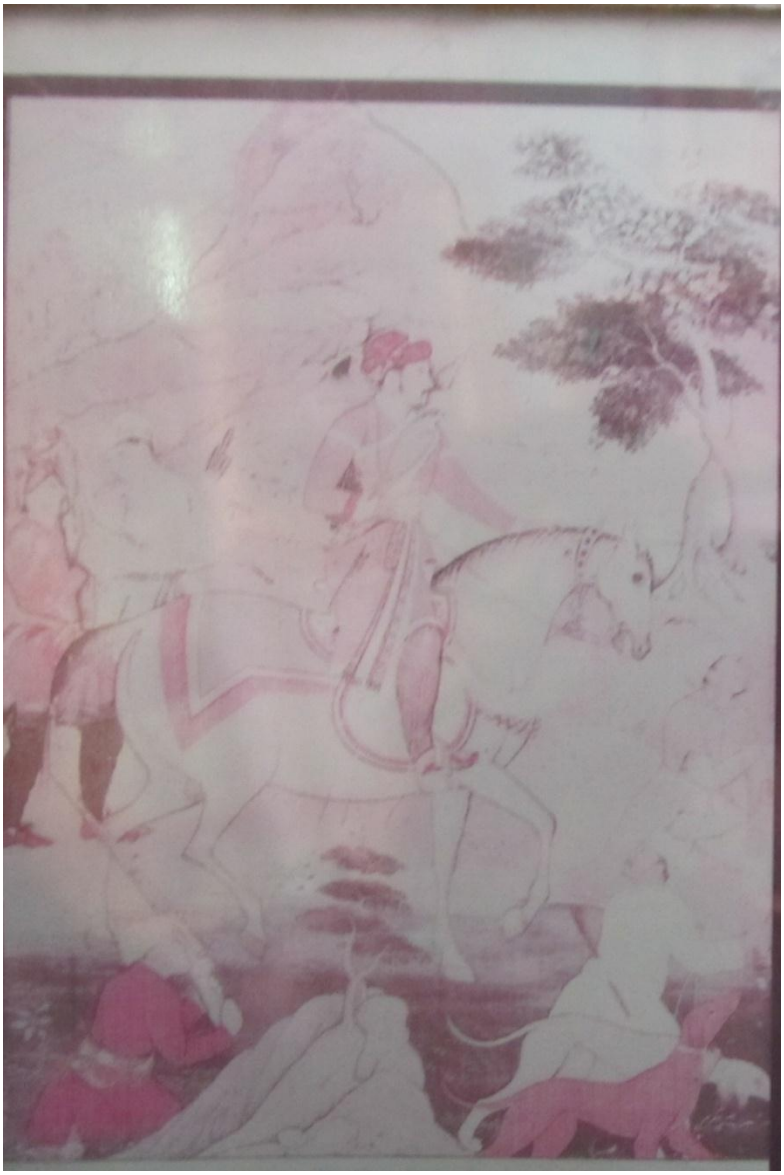

Figure 3.3

Prince Salim riding to the hunting ground around Mandar Hill in Bhagalpur, 1600
Kutub Khana Pir Damaria Waqf, Bhagalpur, Bihar

Prince Salim, in 1600, used to camp at Salimpur, located between Bhagalpur and Sultanpur. While hunting at Mandar Hill he met Shah Pir Damaria of Bhagalpur (*Suba* Bihar), Hazrat Syed Shah Sharafuddin Ali Mohammad. The prince bestowed some gifts along with 108 *bighas* of land. In 1600 Prince Salim after abandoning Chittor military

campaign fled to Allahabad and rose up in rebellion against his father, Akbar. He lavishly distributed gifts, titles, land grants and favours in order to lure royal servants as well as regional chiefs and prominent figures to his own service and thus exert his independence and power.

Figure 3.4

Durbar of Jahangir, Attributed to Govardhan, c.1611
Exhibition: 'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library', 22nd November-31st December 2013
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi

Figure 3.5

Jahangir Showing his Hunting Skill to Rana Karan, c. 1615 A.D.

Picture Post Card, Indian Museum, Kolkata

Figure 3.6

Court of Shah Jahan
Mumtaz Mahal Museum, Red Fort

Figure 3.7

Shah Jahan on Peacock Throne, Mid 17th century
Picture Post Card, Indian Museum, Kolkata

Figure 3.8

Prince Aurangzeb reports to Shah Jahan at Diwan-i-am, Lahore Fort
'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library'
IGNCA, New Delhi

Figure 3.9

Prince Aurangzeb's Adventure with an Infuriated Elephant
Mumaz Mahal Museum, Red Fort, New Delhi

CHAPTER IV

The custom of the exchange of ambassadors has been of extreme relevance since antiquity. In fact, the diplomats of today study the diplomats of olden days in order to gain an insight into the diplomatic relations with various nations. Burak Akcapar, the present Turkish ambassador to India, in his speech, 'History as a Guide to the Future of Turkish-Indian Relations' elucidates through various anecdotes from the historical past of the two nations that how with the aid of examining the Mughal-Ottoman diplomatic relations, the diplomats today can gain a series of valuable lessons and understanding and cementing the present relations.[618]

Rationales for the Exchange of Envoys

Embassies were sent to extend a hand of friendship or to seek some kind of assistance like financial, military, etc. from the host country or to form alliances with the ruler of a territory against another or to establish matrimonial alliances. To seek refuge or to impart religious discourses with the motive to convert the host ruler could also be another rationale behind sending an envoy. The rulers attempted to extend their diplomatic relations through the means of the exchange of envoys. Embassies were sent on the occasions of important events like on the demise or the coronations of the King, on birthdays, and festivals, etc. The Persian Shah, Shah Abbas sent Bahri Beg to the Mughal court with a letter congratulating the Emperor Shah Jahan on his coronation for which he was rewarded with an amount of 20,000 rupees by the Mughal Emperor.[619] Shahjahan sent Jan-Nisar Khan to Persia to congratulate Shah Abbas II on his accession.[620] In 1629, Shahjahan appointed Mir Baraka as the ambassador to Iran for the purpose of congratulating Shah Safi's coronation and condolences on the death of Shah Abbas- the grandfather of Shah Safi.[621]

[618]'History as a Guide to the Future of Turkish-Indian Relations', dated 15.02.2012, newdelhi.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowSpeech.aspx?ID=1952.
[619] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 33.
[620]Ibid., p. 337.
[621]Ibid., p. 34.

A wise and prudent ruler kept himself well-informed about the happenings of especially the neighbouring territories and their political, social, cultural and economic situations. He also needed to have eagerness to extend his links with relatively unfamiliar territories. The ruler of Castile, Enrique III, ruling from 1390-1406, was renowned for spending a huge amount of his wealth on sending several diplomatic missions not only in different parts of Europe but also beyond (Babylonia, Egypt, Tunis, Fez, Morocco and to Timur and Sultan Murad of Turkey and to Moorish lords) in order 'to know of foreign matters', to 'acquire information about their lands and states and customs', 'for it is fitting that great princes should seek to know about their counterparts'.[622] The embassy sent and received denoted power and might of the rulers of both territories through the means of the observations of several ceremonies and protocols. The Castile ruler, Enrique III's one of the most trusted ambassadors, Pero Lopez de Ayala, in one of his important works, *Libro Rimado de Palacio* wrote of the importance of a carefully selected and well-maintained embassy and how it was instrumental in exhibiting the greatness of the ruler:

If his ambassadors are sent out in good order, excellent knights and truly learned scholars, well equipped and well escorted, then they will make a memorable impression on those who see them.

This is certainly some very great prince, they will say, who has sent an embassy that does him so much credit; even he who did not see it will later come to hear of it and its great fame will not be forgotten.[623]

Selection of Ambassadors

दूतं चैव पकुवीर्त सर्वशास्त्रविशारदम्।

इङि॰ताकारचेष्टज्ञं शुचिं दतं कुलोदतम्॥[624]

–Manusmriti, VII.63

[622] *Embassy to Tamerlane*, pp. xi-xii.
[623] Ibid., p. xiii.
[624] Revathy, 'Rajadharma According to Manu', ed. Michael, *The Concept of Rajadharma*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 2005, p. 33. Also see, Nicholas Abercrombie and Bryan S. Turner, 'The Dominant Ideology Thesis', eds. Anthony Giddens and David Held, *Classes, Power, and Conflict, Classical and Contemporary Debates*, University of California Press, California, 1982, p. 63.

The selection of an ambassador to a neighbouring or distant territory was a very crucial matter, for he was the representative of his king and his king's kingdom and therefore the matter had been given importance since the ancient times. According to Manu[625] an ambassador should be observant, a keen student of human psychology. He should be adept in understanding hints, impressions of the face, gestures, etc. He should be honest, skillful and should belong to a noble family.

As the spokesperson of his Emperor, the conduct was closely scrutinized. A trifle instance of misdemeanor could prove detrimental to the relationship between the rulers of two territories and sometimes the matter resulted into a battle. On the other side, a witty and judicious ambassador was instrumental in building friendly atmosphere between the two territories. His diplomatic manoeuvre was praised and appreciated by both sides. The author, Khafi Khan showered his praises on Khan-i-Alam who was deputed as the ambassador to Persia and had successfully concluded the mission. Khafi Khan wrote, 'Khan-i Alam, who owing to his acquaintance with the affairs, regard for the temperament of both parties, and the requirements of the policy of the state…so fulfilled the duties to which he had been appointed that the Shah of Iran addressed him as 'Jan-I Alam', twice came to his (Khan-i Alam's) house, tried to honour him above all other ambassadors and sent him back with suitable gifts and presents.'[626]

Therefore with a lot of caution and considerations, an officer was selected for a diplomatic mission especially when the mission was intended for some important land. An eligible officer appointed as an envoy was someone who was a successful entity. An ambassador sent from a foreign land to the Mughal court was someone who was a significant courtier with a fine lineage. Budaq Beg, the Persian ambassador who had come to the court of Aurangzeb was the son of Qalandar Sultan Chola Tafangchi Aqasi, one of the principal bureaucrats of the Persian Shah, Shah 'Abbas II.[627] The Mughals were equally very guarded in terms of selecting the suitable candidate as the ambassador

[625] Manu, according to the Hindu tradition, is believed to be the progenitor of the human race.
[626] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 234.
[627] *Maasir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 928.

to different territories. When an envoy was appointed to a foreign territory, there was a great prospect of enhancement in his political career and prestige in the aristocratic circle. He was rewarded with an increase in his rank, a rich ceremonial robe and other ritual objects, along with money for his expenses because on his shoulder was a great responsibility of conducting assigned diplomatic missions properly and successfully. The imperial favours bestowed upon him entailed him to be obliged and to reciprocate. Before Lashkar Khan was sent as an envoy to Shah Abbas II of Persia, he was awarded with the mansab of 1500 by Shah Jahan and after his arrival from Persia, his mansab was increased to 2000.[628] On the success of the mission he was further rewarded. However if the mission had failed, the ambassador was blamed for its failure and therefore was demoted. Tarbiyat Khan who was sent to the court of Shah Abbas II had annoyed the Shah so much that he became desirous to commence a battle with Aurangzeb. When he returned, Aurangzeb, disappointed by his comportment at the Persian court, decreased his mansab and forbade him from coming to the imperial *durbar* and thus punished and disgraced him for the utter failure of the diplomatic mission.[629]

However such a prestigious appointment for any noble also meant a great deal of accountability on the part of the appointed ambassador. He was to uphold the reputation of his Emperor at any cost. Also, he was to abide by the royal instructions of his master sternly. Failing to do so could even meant endangering not his life alone but also lives of his family members. When in 1603 Akbar had sent Asad Beg as the Mughal ambassador to the court of the Bijapur ruler, Ibrahim Adil Shah, one of the missions the Emperor had entrusted the ambassador with was to fetch Mir Jamal-ud-din back who was sent much before Asad Beg but had prolonged his stay at the Bijapur court and therefore had not succeeded in fulfilling his assigned tasks. To Mir Jamal-ud-din, the Emperor issued an instruction which said, "If thou dost not return to Court with Asad, thou shalt see what will happen to thee and to thy children."[630]

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[628] *Tazkirat-Umara of Kewal Ram, Biographical Account of the Mughal Nobility 1556-1707 A.D.*, tr. S.M. Azizuddin Husain, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1985, p. 147.
[629] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 234.
[630] *Wikaya-i-Asad Beg*, PHI Persian Literature in Translation, the Packard Humanities Institute, http://persian.packhum.org/persian//.

Reception

Being deserted by a number of his men, and the pressure to retain those who were left, Babur had the relation of comradeship with them. Rules and protocols were not laid firmly. Babur was believed to be informal in his approach towards his interactions with his men and his guests and ambassadors. We have instances wherein he would give audience to foreign ambassadors in a very informal fashion. Once he was enjoying and drinking with his close friends on a house-top and there arrived an envoy, Babur shouted from the place where he was, asking the envoy to come up.[631] By the time of Akbar, it was a distinction conferred on the person who was given admittance to the royal *durbar*[632] and therefore his gratitude was to be reflected in his bearing by observing court protocols.

Envoys from different lands were apportioned receptions at the court differently. Certainly the Mughals credited the significance of an envoy not precisely on the basis of religious background. The envoy from the Ottoman Sultan, the *Khalifa* of the time and the most powerful political entity in the Islamic world, at the Mughal court would not receive as grand a reception as suitable for the Khalifa.[633] Even there were times when the reciprocity of embassies was neglected by the Mughals.

On entering the land of the host ruler, the ambassador had to be keener to know about the land as much as possible and report it back to his ruler. So the host ruler had to be cautious of how, when and where he received the envoy. The ambassador and his retinue were received by some important officials of the empire before they arrived at the court as escorts because the safety of the envoy was the responsibility of the ruler of the host country. The court of Akbar welcomed many visitors from various different regions, religions and customs. He delightfully received Jesuit missionaries at his court. When Father Xavier and his other Jesuit companions had come to Lahore to visit the Emperor, a

[631] *Baburnama*, tr. Beveridge, p. 402.
[632] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 165.
[633] Modern Turkish historians like Hikmat Bayur, etc. who have worked on the Mughal-Ottoman relations, opine that in spite of the great reverence and importance the Ottoman Sultan had as the *Khalifa* of the age in the world of Islam, the Ottoman envoys at the Mughal court received either a poor or at best, lukewarm welcome. Naimur Rahman Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 1989, p. 68.

noble was sent to receive them with the instruction to inform them 'how happy he was to hear of their safe arrival'.[634] As a part of the *istiqbal*[635] ceremony, sending some important officials to receive especially when the guest was a ruler or a prince himself was of utmost relevance. The inability to do so meant the loss of royal dignity and the lack of courtesy and hospitality of the host.[636] Mirza Sulaiman, the king of Badakhshan, who was compelled to leave his land due to the revolt of Shah Rukh Mirza, his grandson, sought the assistance of Akbar and marched towards his territory. The Mughal Emperor dispatched an amount of 50,000 rupees along with many other requirements such as Iraqi horses by one of his principal nobles and the treasurer, Agha Khan.[637] Akbar had also sent Raja Bhagwan Das, governor of Lahore to receive the Mirza and the Raja along with the amirs and governors of every *pargana* and town on the way showed him utmost hospitality. Kunwar Refaqat Ali Khan says that the Mughal Emperor's choice of sending a Hindu noble to greet Mirza Sulaiman was a political strategy. Akbar was eager to invoke a sense of admiration for the pomp and splendour of his court in the Mirza and that reception by a Hindu noble was a befitting way to do so or else Akbar could have sent the governor of the Punjab, Khan-i-Jahan, whose political rank was much higher than that of the Raja.[638]

Badaoni had described the meeting of the two (Akbar and Mirza Sulaiman) in the following words:

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[634] *Akbar & the Jesuits*, p. 62.

[635]This was an obligatory Mughal ceremony which was a welcoming ceremony. Before the arrival of any high-ranking visitor at the Mughal court, he was first received by an important Mughal noble at a fixed spot outside the metropolis.

[636] In early modern Europe, a king had to personally go and greet his foreign-born bride at a fixed meeting point and then escort her to his palace. This was considered as a very ritual and was not to be ignored at any cost, not even when the time to receive her was not very conducive. The moment she reached at the decided meeting place, it was imperative that she was to be greeted by her husband in person. The inability to perform it would have meant inviting 'questions in Christendom' on issues of the king's and his kingdom's honour and prestige. The Tudor King of England, Henry VIII, had paid no attention to personally receive his bride, Anne of Cleves at Blackheath. He was called an impatient and self-indulgent king. Archduchess Mary of Austria, a foreign-born bride of King Louis II of Hungary had to come to greet her outside Buda when his request to his bride to stay at Bratislava and not to enter his territory was ignored. The king, at the time, i.e., in 1515, was engaged in protecting his borders against the approaching army of the Ottoman Sultan, Suleiman II. Retha M. Warnicke, 'HenryVIII's greetings of Anne of Cleves and Early Modern Court Protocol', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 28, No. 4, 1996, The North American Conference on British Studies, pp. 570, 573.

[637] Badaoni, vol. II, pp. 217-8.

[638] Kunwar Refaqat Ali Khan, *The Kachhwahas under Akbar and Jahangir*, Kitab Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, p. 31.

> first of all the nobles, and magnates of the Court, and the pillars of the State, and afterwards the Emperor himself, with the assembled Amirs went out five *cosses* to meet him. And on that day 5,000 elephants, some with housings of European velvet, and some with Turkish cloth of gold, and some with chains of gold and of silver, were drawn up in line on both sides : also Arabian and Persian horses with golden saddles of like splendor. And between each pair of elephants they placed a car of cheetahs with golden collars, and coverings of velvet and fine linen, and an oxen-car with fillets of embroidered gold…And when he saw the Emperor afar off, he alighted without hesitation from his horse, and ran forward to meet him with *salams*. The Emperor with politeness quickly descended from his saddle to the ground, and would not permit him to pay any of the formal acts of politeness, and customary humiliations. After embracing him he remounted, and ordered that he should ride with him, and occupied himself in making the kindest enquiries after his welfare. In the palace [called] Anuptalao (the door, walls, and interior of which they had furnished with figured canopies of gold cloth, and splendid carpets, and golden vessels and all other kinds of furniture in abundance) he gave him a place by his side on the throne of Sultanate, and also summoned the Prince, his son, and introduced him to him. after they had finished their repast he granted his request for assistance, and promised him aid with such money and troops, as might enable him to reduce Badakhshan, and had apartments prepared for the Mirza in the tower of the Hatyapul, where was the *Naqarah-khanah*.[639]

As per the required comportment for escorting the ambassador and his retinue safely to the imperial capital, the local officials of the empire too, through whose assigned provinces the foreign entourage passed by, had the responsibility to fulfill their needs and cooperate with the imperial escorts. Clavijo, a Castilian envoy of Henry III sent to the court of one of the Mughal ancestors, Timur, recorded in his account the generosity and

[639] Badaoni, vol. II, pp. 218-9.

hospitality of men they encountered in the territory of Timur. They were liberally supplied with food and other such needs. The army of Timur provided them and their animals with food especially when passing through a difficult terrain like the dessert region where the procurement of provisions was not easy. They guarded the ambassador and his attendants and their baggage and beasts. The army gave their tents as well.[640] Clavijo and his men were not only presented whatever they required on their way but were also bestowed with valuable gifts. Before they left the tents of some Chagatays, they were honoured with robes of *kincob* (gold brocade).[641] On reaching Balkh, they were offered 'amply with provisions and excellent wine' and a horse and again a robe of *kincob*.[642]

When Humayun was exiled from Hindustan and had to flee to Persia and seek refuge with the Shah, Shah Tahmasp had issued an order to the governor of Herat to give the Mughal Emperor a reception appropriate to his royal status and also instructed to march some miles in order to greet him and that the official on meeting him was to exhibit the utmost reverence for the exiled Emperor, in fact more than he would to his own Persian ruler. Regular feasts and amusements were to be organized. The governor as per the royal commands went 12 miles from his province, Herat to receive Humayun. He for the span of three or four days kept the Mughal Emperor entertained with splendid banquets, generous gifts of several fine horses, fabrics, gold, etc. He also issued instructions to other governors and the people of those provinces, echoing the imperial commands that the Mughal Emperor was to be accorded the supreme honour from wherever he passed through.[643] Finally when Humayun had reached Qazwin, the imperial seat, to receive him, the Shah had sent his brother, Mirza Bairam accompanied with all the principal nobles and imperial assistants. They marched 10 miles from the Persian capital city and met Humayun who was brought to the capital with its streets and markets beautifully adorned with mirrors in the honour of their guest. [644]

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[640] *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 165.
[641] Ibid., p. 167.
[642] Ibid., p. 168.
[643] *Contemporary Dutch Chronicle of Mughal India*, trs. Brij Narain and Sri Ram Sharma, Susil Gupta (India) Ltd., Calcutta, 1957, p. 8.
[644] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

More elaborate and detailed instructions of Shah Tahmasp (i.e., from the colour of the tent to the kinds of entertainment, gifts and honours to be offered) in an edict (*nishan*), addressed to the Persian governor of Sabzwar, Muhammad Khan, concerning the manner of reception which was to be granted to the Mughal Emperor by the governor, are recorded in the *Akbar Nama*. As per the *nishan*, the Shah ordered the said governor to assign five hundred skilled men with all the essential requirements and swift horses and beasts of burden to be sent for Humayun without delay. The Shah was sending a hundred fine horses from the imperial stable with their golden saddles while the governor was to dispatch six sturdy horses from his collection, specifying that the saddles which he sent along with the horses were to be of the colour azure and embellished. The Shah was also sending an extraordinary side-dagger encrusted with delicate gems which was a gift to him from his father. A golden scimitar, a jewelled girdle, 'four hundred pieces of velvet and satin from Europe and Yexd…two-pile gold-brocaded velvet carpets and coverlets (*namad takya*) of goat's hair with satin lining, and three pairs of large carpets twelve cubits (square?), four Goshkani of fine silk, and twelve tents, crimson, green and white' were sent too for Humayun. The orders were also made regarding feasts and entertainments, pitching of the tents, guarding his person, their conduct towards the Mughal Emperor and so on and so forth in great details.[645]

On 20 April 1661when the Persian ambassador Bwadak Beg reached Multan, the subedar of the province Tarbiyat Khan gave a feast to him along with five thousand rupees. On arriving at Lahore Khalilullah Khan presented the ambassador with 20,000 rupees, a dagger, vessel and clothes of fine quality. Finally when he entered Saraiwa wali, Aurangzeb permitted him to dine with him and to kiss the ground.[646]

When Shah Jahan had sent the Mughal ambassadors, Makramat Khan to Adil Khan of Bijapur and Mulla 'Abd al-Latif to Qutb al-Mulk of Golconda, they were received by the rulers themselves. The Mughal ambassador, Makramat Khan on reaching the outskirts of Bijapur, was welcomed by the ruler of the territory, Adil Khan who himself went out and marched a distance of four *kos* for the *istiqbal* ceremony and to 'receive the *farman* and

[645] *Akbarnama*, vol. I, pp. 420-30.
[646] *Aurangzebnama*, pp. 60-1.

imperial gifts; and afterward conducted the Khan into the city with great respect and showed him the usual civilities.'[647] Likewise the moment Mulla 'Abd al-Latif, another Mughal ambassador had arrived at the neighborhood of Golconda, he was received by Qutb al-Mulk. The ruler covered the distance of five *kos* to receive him and 'showed all the reverence and respect usually observed on the receipt of a *farman* and presents of the monarch of the age.'[648]

However sometimes the Mughal officials would try to form a secret alliance with the ambassador, stimulating the Emperor to grant some favour to them and in return, the official would aid him in attaining the success of the embassy. The English ambassador, Sir William Norris discovered that Ghulam Mahmud, the son of the deputy *Wazir*, Arshad Khan wanted the Ambassador's recommendation to the Emperor for the Governorship of Surat.[649] Norris also felt that in order to forward the affairs of the mission at the court, appeasing some important Mughal officials was not enough but there were a host of the 'underlings' to be pleased and that they never hesitated to claim from the ambassador certain things in the name of their masters and it was tough to tell whether or not those were the real claims.[650] Once a chief eunuch of the *Wazir* visited Norris's camp and asked for 'two "cases of spirits" ' in the name of the *Wazir's* Secretary.[651]

The details of the reception of the ambassador or the manner he should be conducted were also discussed and negotiated, especially when the embassy was regarded as a significant one. Norris wrote the *Wazir's* Secretary, informing him about his expectations regarding his reception by the Mughal officials. He demanded that he 'should come in full State, with flags, kettledrums, trumpets, and everything else in accordance with the custom of his own country. On alighting from his *palanquin*, he should be received and conducted to the *Wazir* by the highest officer. When the Ambassador arrived at the place appointed for the interview, the *Wazir* should enter by another way in order to meet, receive and embrace him standing. The Ambassador would take a seat on a level with the

[647] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 171.
[648] Ibid, p. 171.
[649] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 269.
[650] Ibid., p. 271.
[651] Loc. cit.

Wazir, and his secretary, Dr. Edward Norris, Mr. Harlewyn, Mr. Mill, and another gentleman, with His Excellency's sword of State, would then have places given them suitable to their ranks. It was always, Norris pointed out, the custom in Europe that when an Ambassador visited a person of rank or high official, that person should return the visit himself, and if he could not do so, that the visit should not be returned by any other person of inferior rank. The Ambassador was to leave first, and the *Wazir* should rise at the same time. Finally, if at any time any greater honour or mark of respect had been paid to the Ambassador of any other King over and above what was stipulated in the document, Norris insisted on the same as his right'.[652] However, the *Wazir's* Secretary instantly declined some of his demands, especially his demand to bring sword, the beating of a drum and to be received by the *Wazir*.

Since the way the ambassador received reflected the dignity of his rank, therefore Norris persisted in his demands, emphasizing that 'the previous Ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, had been received by Prince Khurram, Jahangir's son, at Burhanpore (in Khandesh), in full State, after the manner of his own country. He himself, therefore, was justified in expecting from the *Wazir* a reception similar to that accorded to Roe'.[653]

The ambassador was granted the permission as a special favour that once he had alighted from his palanquin before entering the gulalbar, he could ride on horseback to the apartment where he was greeted by Ruh-ullah Khan, Yar Ali Beg, and other high officials. No one could enter the gulalbar except for the Emperor's sons. The nobles escorted the ambassador into an inner apartment. After waiting for a while, Norris along with some of his own men, Dr. Edward Norris, Mr. Harlewyn, Mr. Mill, Mr. Hale and Rustamji, was taken to the Diwan-i-Khas. The ambassador and his entourage were allowed to make their "addresses after the manner" of their own country.[654]

Protocols at the Court

On reaching the territory of a recipient, the expenses and security of the ambassador became the responsibility of the King of that country, especially in case of a high-ranking

[652] Ibid., pp. 271-2.
[653] Ibid., p. 272.
[654] Ibid., pp. 312-3.

visitor or the mission from important land. He was received outside the capital city by the high ranking noble of the empire. The standard norms for greeting an envoy required the prominent officials of the host territory to march a few miles and receive the envoy with suitable honour, bestowing upon him ceremonial objects, gifts and *farmans* along with money for his personal expenditure. Arsalan Agha, the Ottoman ambassador of Sultan Murad IV to Shah Jahan, on reaching the land of his host, was welcomed with a robe of honour and a royal order. Khawass Khan, a governor as per the instruction offered him the amount of 10,000 rupees from the state exchequer and an additional 6,000 rupees from his side. The governor of Siwistan, Qazak Khan and Shah Quli Khan, governor of Bhakkar presented 4,000 rupees and Najabat Khan, Governor of Multan made an offering of 6,000 rupees to the Turkish ambassador.[655]

The important embassy was to stay at the imperial court for a long duration. This was practiced in the court of Timur as well, 'for its is the custom not to see any ambassador until five or six days are passed, and the more important the ambassador may be, the longer he has to wait.'[656] When the Spanish ambassadors went to the court of Timur, they were immediately instructed by the two men at the court to perform the salutation as per the Timurid custom. '…two knights came and took them by the arms, and made them kneel again… The knights who conducted them then raised them, and led them out.'[657]

The protocols were to be strictly observed by the ambassadors at the court of the Mughals and therefore, be well aware of them beforehand. The more they were well acquainted with court procedures, the better the chance of realizing the motive(s) of the diplomatic mission. Mr. Pedro Pereira to whom the English ambassador William Norris had met on a number of occasions before he had his first audience with the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, on matters and expectations pertaining to the conduct of the ambassadors at the court, informed the ambassador that 'nothing was more necessary than to procure a

[655] *Shahjahan Nama*, p. 267.
[656] Clavijo, p. 131.
[657] Ibid., p. 152.

man thoroughly conversant with the manners and customs of the Court'.[658] A slight slackness could be enough for the failure of the mission.

The place where the ambassador was given audience was of utmost significance as it reflected the importance accorded to the respective embassy by the host country. An Armenian who was well aware of the court etiquette and had been twice at the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb's camp and was an attendant to a Dutch envoy informed that the Dutch ambassador was received at "ye common place of giving audience"[659] i.e., *Diwan-i-am*, indicating how of less consequence was the embassy in the eyes of the Mughal Emperor. Based on such observations, the Armenian was of the opinion that the English ambassador, Norris since 'represented a crowned head, greater privileges might be accorded him than were allowed to the Dutch envoy' and that he 'should insist on having audience in the Ghusal-Khanah, or the private audience chamber, which was the most honourable, and where Norris, being allowed nearer approach to the Emperor's person…'[660]

It was similarly a momentous occasion for the host Emperor as well because it was imperative to project himself and his court as magnificent and to demonstrate his power. Timur would often greet foreign ambassadors coming to his court in his magnificent gardens and made arrangements for their accommodation there. Often the ambassadors had to relocate their lodging especially from one garden to another. 'This house and garden, where the lord received the ambassadors[661], was called Dilkoosha, and in it there were many silken tents, and the lord remained there until the following Friday, when he went to another garden, where there was a very rich palace, which he had lately ordered to be built, called Bayginar.' 'the lord went to another house and garden, near the former one, called Dilicaya…'[662]

[658] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 211.
[659] Loc. cit.
[660] Loc. cit.
[661] The ambassadors, viz., Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo (a knight of Madrid), Gomez de Salazar and a master of Theology named Fray Alonzo Paez de Santa Maria were appointed by the ruler of Castille, Henry III.
[662] Ibid., p. 140.

The anxiety to impress the ambassador and to relent no suspicion or questions especially regarding his sovereignty was evident even in the times when the Empire was in its nascent stage. Humayun was struggling not only against the Afghans but even his half-brothers were eagerly waiting for some opportunities to seize power from him before he re-captured Hindustan. When the ambassador of Sher Khan had come to see Humayun, he was given the audience the very next morning. It was at this time that Mirza Kamran made a following request to Humayun, 'To-morrow there will be an entertainment, and Shir Khan's envoy will be present. If I may sit on a corner of your Majesty's carpet, so that there may be distinction between me and my brothers, it will be a cause of my exaltation.'[663] Clearly Mirza Kamran wanted to distinguish himself from his two other brothers, Hindal and Askari, by sitting on the same carpet as that of Humayun's. however sharing a space with the Emperor on a politically important event could also implied that Mirza Kamran was aiming to hint his relation with his Emperor-brother, Annette S. Beveridge interprets Mirza's action as an attempt to claim recognition as a ruler and that he was on par with the Emperor. Understanding well the underlying intention of his brother's petition, Humayun who had earlier out of his own readiness entrusted all his royal power into the hands of his servant, a water-carrier[664], sent a reply in the form of a verse:

'Although one's image be shown in the mirror,

It remains always apart from one's self.'[665]

The conduct of the ambassador was also important in terms of constructing or breaking the relation between the rulers of two empires. The disrespectful message Timur had received from the Chinese envoys invited his anger and goaded him to invade China.

[663] Gulbadan Begum, pp. 144-5.
[664] The water-carrier saved Humayun from drowning into a river at Chausa. Overwhelmed by this act of kindness of his servant, the Emperor made him sit on the throne and instructed all his nobles to follow the orders of his servant who was now the Emperor for a span of two whole days. The court which was held by the water-carrier was not attended by Mirza Kamran and Hindal. The former excused himself on the ground of his illness while the latter went to Alwar to get arms ready. Mirza Kamran even let His Majesty know of his disapproval, 'Gifts and favours of some other kind ought to be the servant's reward. What propriety is there in setting him on the throne? At a time when Shir Khan is near, what kind of affair is this to engage your Majesty?' Ibid, p. 140.
[665] Ibid. p. 145.

However, Timur in those times was an old man, therefore, the tough terrain and the harsh and extreme cold climate made him severely ill and he died on his way to China.[666] Aurangzeb had a Persian ambassador stopped on the border of the Mughal territory and seized all the Indian slaves he was taking away whom he had bought for a very meager amount owing to the famine. This was done in lieu of what the Persian ambassador had done to the gifts of the Shah for Aurangzeb. Shah Abbas I had sent stunning twenty-five horses along with other exquisite choice gifts for Aurangzeb to congratulate him on his coronation. But before the time the ambassador departured from the Mughal court, he had the sturdy horses hamstrung.[667] Then on another occasion the Mughal ambassador, Tarbiyat Khan who was sent to Persia, had seemed to offend Shah Abbas I and that the ambassador 'stepped so much beyond the traditions of good manners as to evoke the ill-temper of the Shah and bring about his own disgrace. He so changed the hereditary love and affection of the parties into enmity that matters came to the marching of the armies on both sides. This behaviour of Tarbiyat Khan was against the traditions of experienced ambassadors'.[668] As a result of this, the Shah advanced with his huge army for an offensive in 1667.

Gift Exchange Ceremony

No one could enter the court with empty hands. The gift ceremony was one of the significant mediums of communication between the Mughal Emperor and the rulers of foreign lands. Gifts brought for the Emperor by the nobles, European travellers and also by the foreign dignitaries were first examined to check if it was worthy of being offered to His Majesty. The Spanish ambassador to Timur's court, Clavijo and his companions' gifts were taken from them to be presented at court when Timur gave them the audience.[669] Details of gifts received and made from both the sides are mentioned frequently and the total value of gifts was too estimated.

[666] Clavijo, p. xlix.
[667] Bernier, pp. 150-1.
[668] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 234.
[669] '…two knights came to them, and said that they were to give up those presents, which they brought for the lord, to certain men who would lay them before him, for such were the orders of the private Meerzas of the lord ; so the ambassadors gave the presents to the knights.' Clavijo, p. 131.

Gifts for their exquisiteness had always found their way into the memoirs of the Emperor or his court chroniclers' accounts or even in the accounts of those who had visited the court and witnessed the ceremony. Jahangir's memoirs is full of such examples wherein he had always mentioned or estimated the total value of gifts he gave to anyone or he had received from someone. Sharif al-Din Ali Yazdi, a fifteenth century Persian historian wrote in the biography of Timur, the *Zafarnamah* or Book of Victory under the patronage of a Timurid prince, Ibrahim Sultan (Timur's grandson) that the Spanish ambassador's presentation of valuable goods to Timur. "He [Timur] next visited the garden of Dilen Shah, where he received an ambassador from one of the greatest sovereigns of Europe, who brought him a number of rare and curious things and offered magnificent gifts of great value. Particularly, there were hangings on which the Europeans had worked portraits, with such skill and delicacy that if one were to compare them to the famous paintings that the artist, Mani, set down long ago on the cloth of Artene, Mani would blush to see his works appearing so inferior…"[670]

Gifts from the Emperor to Ambassadors

Gifts by the Emperor presented to ambassadors reflected how much importance he had accorded to the diplomatic visit. The kinds of gift, the number of times and the occasions for offering them to the envoy highly depended on the relations between the two rulers, on the motives of the diplomatic missions and also on the conduct of the ambassador. A subordinated ruler receiving a Mughal envoy would send with him valuable and exquisite gifts for the Emperor because the sent gifts represented the subordinated ruler's humility. Sometimes the Mughal ambassador was stringently instructed regarding the kind of objects he was to obtain from a subordinate ruler. The demand of some of the most valuable gifts or the most renowned personality or object time and again meant the assertion of the superiority of the Mughal Emperor over the local potentates. The demands could comprise of anything the Emperor desired and the subordinate ruler had to oblige. Before Tansen, the celebrated musician, was patronized by Akbar, he was a singer at the court of Raja Ram Chand Baghela, the Raja of Bhattah. The Raja had to send the musician to the imperial court on the demand of Akbar. It is to be noted that

[670] *Embassy to Tamerlane*, pp. xvii-xviii.

Tansen, on his first musical performance at the imperial court, was exalted by the bestowal of a whooping amount of two *lakhs* of rupees by Akbar,[671] signalling the elevation in musician's standing. In his praise, Fazl writes, 'A singer like him has not been in India for the last thousand years.'[672] An eminent French anthropologist, Claude Levi Strauss in his work, *Les Structures Elementaires de la Parente* (The Elementary Forms of Kinship) regards transfers or circulation of men and women as the most significant form of gifts in systems where symbolisms play a major role.[673]

When Akbar dispatched Asad Beg to the Deccan provinces of Bijapur, Golconda, Bidar, and the Carnatic, he wanted the ambassador to acquire all the fine elephants and choice jewels from there. However the ambassador had to conclude his diplomatic mission as soon as he received the news of the death of Akbar.[674]

The demand of a particular gift was put forward not only by a superior ruler from his men and the subjugated rulers but also by an independent ruler from another sovereign. The Persian Shah, Abbas I expressed his desire to the Mughal Emperor Jahangir that he wanted to drink wine from the Emperor's wine cup.[675] The subjugated rulers too requested for certain things as gifts to them. As per the request of Adil Khan, the ruler of Bijapur an inscribed *farman* on a golden tablet, conferring the title of Adil Shah was dispatched through Nur al-din Quli by the Mughal Emperor along with his other requests, viz., a robe of honour, a dirk, a dagger and some choice wares of Kashmir for which he had requested.[676] The prominent nobles too expressed their demands for some particular gifts and rejected if those were not liked just like their Emperor. Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador had presented Asaf Khan, the father of Arjumand Bano Begum, a pair of English gloves as well as a sleeping cap. The English gloves were given back to the ambassador, informing him that those were of no utility to the said noble.[677]

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[671] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 445.
[672] Ibid., vol. I, p. 681.
[673] Mary Douglas, 'No Free Gifts', Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, p. xix.
[674] *Wikaya-i-Asad Beg*.
[675] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 144-5.
[676] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 509.
[677] Roe, p. 349.

On several different occasions, gifts were presented to the ambassador at the court such as on the day he was given his first audience and the day of his departure, on important court celebrations and festivities, etc. Muhammad Ali Beg, the Persian ambassador in his first audience with the Emperor Shah Jahan was given 'a gold-embroidered robe of honor, and a Qizilbashi tiara and turban ornament studded with gems...a jeweled casket for holding pan and a golden salver and a cup filled with *argcha*, with saucer and cover of the same precious metal—altogether worth 20,000 rupees'.[678] On the eve of Shah Jahan's 42nd lunar birthday which was held on 23 October 1632, the said Persian envoy, was granted with a gold-embroidered robe of honor, a jewel encrusted girdle, a male elephant and a female elephant with a silver *howdah*, four big gold *mohurs*, and rupees and so on. The total expenditure spent on the ambassador from his arrival till departure from the court was amounted to 'three lakhs and 16, 000 rupees in cash, besides about one lakh worth of goods'. [679] On the day of the celebrations of the *'Id al-Qurban* in 1635, the ambassador who had come from Balkh to the court, was offered the amount of 30,000 rupees.[680]

Before the English ambassador, Norris presented King William's and his gifts for Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor honoured him with a robe. And the Emperor himself took care to see and select the robe to be presented to the ambassador brought to him by one of his officials, Ruh-ullah Khan, rather than entrusting the task to him. In the process of selecting an appropriate robe fitting for the ambassador, he discarded three. The ceremony of robing the ambassador was performed in a separate apartment; thereafter he returned to the presence of the Emperor.[681] He was also rewarded with an elephant.[682]

Gifts exchanged between two rulers could also include the gift of women. Timur, as the embassy from Castile returned, had sent to the Castile ruler along with several precious gifts two young and beautiful Christian maidens, both had noble connections. In fact one was the granddaughter of the King of Hungary. Both were captured by the Turks at the battle of Nicopolis and were placed in the harem of the Turkish Sultan Bayazid. When

[678] *Shah Jahan Nama*, pp. 62-3.
[679] Ibid., p. 87.
[680] Ibid., p. 151.
[681] *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 313.
[682] Ibid., p. 330.

Timur defeated and captured the Sultan, he had come to acquire the two women as well.[683] Babur had received a gift of two Circassian girls as one of the many gifts sent by the Persian ruler, Shah Tahmasp through the Mughal ambassador, Khwajagi Asad.[684]

On the departure of the ambassador from the imperial court, the host ruler offered all the choice gifts he had arranged for the master of the visiting ambassador. The choice gifts selected were according to the significance of the delegation perceived by the host ruler. If in the eyes of the host the diplomatic mission held great relevance from various vantages, the selection of proper choice gifts was equally given utmost attention. The envoy and his entourage too received grand gifts. Sayyid Beg, the Persian ambassador of Shah Tahmasp, who was sent to the imperial court of Akbar on the event of the death of the royal father of the Emperor and to offer the condolences of the Shah as well as his congratulations on the accession of Akbar. The envoy was offered an amount of 'seven *lacs* of *tankahs* and a horse, and dress of honour, besides all the hospitality and kindness, which the Amirs showed him, so that he went back from Hindustan with gifts and presents without number'.[685] There were also occasions when the Emperor deliberately made no endeavour to pick gifts for the master of the receiving envoy, Abdullah Khan because the diplomatic mission held not much significance. In the year, 1656, for instance, when the time for the departure of the ambassador of Kashghar from the court of Shah Jahan had arrived, he plainly received the amount of 15,000 rupees to pay for purchasing goods of Hindustan as gifts for his ruler. The Mughal court account makes no mention of the selection of the gifts done in the honour of the Khashghar ruler either by the Emperor or by any one of his nobles. The ambassador himself picked items for his master which constituted the Mughal Emperor's choice gifts.[686] Evidently, the choice gifts and the way those were selected and by who and the amount spent on acquiring the gifts reflected and promoted the gradations of hierarchy among rulers of different territories.

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[683] *Embassy to Tamerlane*, pp. xii, 308.
[684] Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padshah *Ghazi*, *Babur – Nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, tr. Annette Susannah Beveridge, vol. I, Oriental Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, rep. 1970, p. 540.
[685] Abdul Qadir Ibn-i-Muluk Shah known as Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhab-t-Tawarikh*, vol. II, tr. W. H. Lowe, Academica Asiatica India, Patna, 1973, p. 49.
[686] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 525.

Gifts by Ambassadors to the Emperor

The choice gifts brought by the ambassador were not given completely in the very first audience with the Emperor. On his very first audience with Shah Jahan dated 22 March 1631, Muhammad 'Ali Beg offered the royal letter of the Shah, congratulating the Emperor on his accession.[687] Just after some days of the first meeting, the ambassador was given another audience with the Emperor i.e. on 26 March of the year. This time he presented his master's choice gifts which were worth three *lakhs* of rupees. Again after the gap of two or three days, the envoy offered his own gifts and this amounted to 50,000 rupees.[688] Likewise Babahra Be, the ambassador of the king of Balkh, Nazar Muhammad Khan in May 1635 on the first meeting offered Shah Jahan 'nine keen-sighted falcons (*baz*), two other falcons (*shunqar*), and nine hawks, some of which were trained to the sport of hunting herons, and others even to deer-hunting'.[689] The following day he presented the rest of the choice gifts sent by the Balkh ruler, consisting of '100 horses; 50 camels, male and female; 100 maunds of lapis-lazuli; some fabrics manufactured in Iran and Transoxiana; and some sable fur, tapestries, carpets, brocades, chinaware and so forth—the value of the whole being estimated at 70,000 rupees'.[690]

Gifts were made by the Emperor of the ambassador, by the ambassador himself and by the people who had accompanied him. The gifts of the ruler comprised of choice gifts which included rare, expensive and popular items of their country and this was always mentioned by the court chroniclers. For choosing gifts especially for an important ruler, his fondness or preference was surely regarded. As the Mughals had a great liking for hunting, therefore the Balkh ruler in 1638 along with the appointed ambassador from his court sent his hunt master (*Mir Shikaran*) as well to the court of Shah Jahan. The *Mir Shirkaran* brought falcons which were trained exclusively in hunting herons and deer.[691] To Qaisar of Rum in 1654 Shah Jahan dispatched an armlet made of *bezoar* stone and several other precious stones such as sapphires, rubies, pearls and emeralds through the

[687] Ibid., p. 62.
[688] Ibid., p. 63.
[689] Ibid., p. 148.
[690] Ibid., p. 149.
[691] Ibid., p. 244.

ambassador of the Ottoman ruler who had come to the imperial court and had notified him of a severe plague at Istanbul.[692]

Some of the gifts brought to Timur by the Egyptian ambassador from the Egyptian Sultan, Nasir-ad-Din Faraj the Mamluk, included exotic beasts like six ostriches and a giraffe. The Spanish ambassador, Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo found the creatures, especially giraffe 'strangely made and after a fashion unknown to us'[693] and had given a long description on the animal. And since Mughal Emperors were connoisseur of art and culture[694], therefore, gifts presented to them also comprised of manuscripts, either translated or written by the ambassador himself. Father Jerome Xavier who had headed a Jesuit mission to Akbar's court from 1595 to 1615, had translated into Persian his own

[692] Ibid., p. 500.
[693] *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 121.
[694] Manuscripts were a prized possession for Mughal Emeprors and the members of the royal family and thus, highly valued. The owner of a manuscript had their seal embossed on it, signalling the proprietorship and the refined personality of the proprietor. A beautifully illustrated copy of *Shahnama* or 'Book of Kings', the national epic poem of the Iranians written by Firdausi for the Central Asian prince Muhammad Juki (1402-45) was acquired by Babur, bearing the ownership seals of Babur, read as 906 AH (1500-01). The copy also contains Shah Jahan's inscriptions in the centre which informs that on his accession day, he took ownership of the manuscript, 'on the month of Bahman *Ilahi*, corresponding to 8 Jumadi II of the Hijri, year 1037 (14 February 1628). Hamida Banu Begam is said to have her own personal library. Hijri, one of the poets at Akbar's court had written a volume of poetry called *Divan-i-Hijri*, 'Collected Poems of Hijri' and the volume has her petal-shaped seal inscribed 'Hamida Banu daughter of 'Ali Akbar, 957 (1550-51)' which was later after her death was transferred to the imperial collection in September 1604. The copies of *Shahnama* and the *Divan-i-Hijri* are available at the British Museum, London.
In fact manuscript collection was a rage not only among the Mughal Emperors, princes and princesses but also among the nobles and local elites, creating a distinguished class of 'cultured men'. In the later Mughal period too, offering manuscripts as a gift was a continued trend. And some of the highly prized Mughal manuscripts had even found their way to the libraries of the rulers of the Mughal successor states. The library of Awadh ruler, Wajid Ali Shah had treasures like the *Padshahnama*. It was also gifted to the visiting governor general, Sir John Shore by Asaf-ud-daulah. When Dr. Aloys Sprenger, the Austrian orientalist and principal of Delhi College, was appointed as Extra Assistant to the new Resident, William Sleeman at Lucknow by the government of India in 1847 to catalogue the massive collection of Arabic and Persian literature works available in the library of Wajid Ali Shah, was elated to have found such riches and reported it to Henry Elliot, Secretary to the Foreign Department. Unfortunately, the royal library of the Awadh state was not in a very fine condition. He (Sprenger) observed the way they were kept in some forty boxes. And the boxes, called camel trunks were found in an awful shape and were full of rats. There were books which were also stored in bags and were totally annihilated by an army of white ants. In the present times, it is only the catalogue prepared by Sprenger that remains of the library of the Awadh state. Besides, many of them were destroyed (burnt to ashes or dumped into the river) by rebel soldiers in 1857.
The keen interest shown by the British colonial officials in India was not something extraordinary. The French and Russian governments, likewise, had placed their attention in the works of the Oriental libraries, cataloguing and procuring them. Accordingly, the French government had their officials examined the libraries in Algiers, Egypt and Constantinople while the Russian government for the Imperial Academy had bought a List of Oriental works, prepared and published by Mr. Fahn of St. Petersburg in 1845. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *The Last King in India, Wajid Ali Shah*, Hurst Publishers, London, 2014, pp. 92-95.

work, 'Truth-reflecting Mirror', originally written in Portuguese and presented it to Jahangir in 1609. The Persian translated work of his is called *A'inah-i-haqqnama*. It is a dialogue between a priest, a philosopher and a Mullah.[695]

Sir Thomas Roe in his account gave a detailed description of the extremely valuable gifts brought by the Persian ambassador, Muhammad Ali Beg for the Mughal Emperor and admitted his inadequacy in terms of the observation of the gift-ceremony:

> He brought for Presentes 3 tymes 9 horses of Persia and Arabia, this being a Ceremonius Number among them, 9 mules very fayre and lardg, 7 Camells laden with veluett, two Sutes of Europe Arras (which I suppose was Venetian hangings of veluett with gould, and not Arras), two Chestes of Persian hangings, on Cabinett rich, 40 Muskettes, 5 Clockes, one Camell laden with Persian Cloth of gould, 8 Carpettes of silke, 2 Rubyes ballast, 21 Cammelles of wyne of the Grape, 14 Camelles of distilld sweet waters, 7 of rose waters, 7 daggers sett with stones, 5 swordes sett with stones, 7 Venetian looking glasses, but these so faire, so rich that I was ashamed of the relation.[696]

Roe was particularly alert to these ceremonies, for he had been acutely conscious that his own gifts had not been successful. The royal ladies of the Mughal household appreciated the offerings of the English ambassador.[697] Nevertheless Roe attended the royal *durbar* without getting any customary gifts for the Emperor. The latter in a roundabout way reminded the ambassador of the court ceremony.[698] Realizing the significance of the gift ceremony in Mughal courtly culture, he wrote back to the East India Company in January 1615:

> '…he accepted your presents well; but after the English were come away he asked the Jesuyte whether the King of England were a great Kyng that sent presents of so small valewe…[699] He, thus, recommended a list of items to be sent to please the Emperor which included 'four or five handsome cases of that wyne' which in his opinion 'wilbe more welcome then the richest jewell in

[695] The *A'inah-i-haqqnama* is also now in the possession of the British Museum, London.
[696] Roe, pp. 296-97.
[697] Ibid., p. 349
[698] Ibid., p. 394.
[699] Ibid., p. 99.

> Cheapesyde.', 'Pictures, lardge, on cloth, the frames in peeces ; but they must be good, and for varyetye some story, with many faces, for single to the life hath beene more usuall.' For the Emperor's chief Queen, he suggested 'fine needle woorke toyes, fayre bone lace, cuttwoorke, and some handsome wrought wastcote, sweetbaggs or cabinets…', 'any faire China bedsteeds ; or cabinets or truncks of Japan' for those were considered to be 'rich presents'.[700]

The choice gifts of a ruler who had sent his ambassador to another ruler was deemed as extremely significant. The gifts which were presented by ambassadors were also scrutinized. His own gifts were given most likely on a different date. Babahra Be, the Balkh ambassador, who arrived at the Mughal court in early May 1635, as we mentioned earlier, offered his own gifts right after the days of presenting the choice gifts of Nazar Muhammad Khan, his master. His gifts comprised of '40 horses, 35 male and female camels, and some sable fur and other products of Turan.'[701] As per the custom, the gifts received were to be reciprocated. Accordingly Babahra Be was rewarded 'a handsome robe of honor, a dagger with jewelled scabbard, one gold mohur of 400 *tolas* weight, called "star of good fortune" (*kaukab-i-tali'*), and a rupee of the same weight. The officer who came in charge of the choice gifts was also gratified at receiving a robe of honor and a gold mohur and rupee weighing 100 *tolas* each'.[702]

The selection of proper gifts held a lot of significance in the gift-exchange ceremony for the Mughals. Of several advices received by William Norris, the English ambassador through the conversations with Europeans before he visited the imperial court was on the importance of offering choice gifts to the Mughal nobles otherwise 'the ministers would create insufferable delays and hindrances in the conduct of Norris's business'. Suggestions were made for giving cash as it was highly appreciated or "stronge spiritts wch all the Moores are fond of Exept ye Mogull who keeps strictly to his Religion & drinks none".[703] Thus in order to receive the audience of the Emperor, it was important to

[700] Loc. cit.
[701] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 149.
[702] Ibid., p. 149.
[703] *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 211.

bring gifts for the Emperor for sure but to gain the audience, it was important to bring gifts for the nobles. 'The valuable presents entrusted to him (William Norris) for the Mughal, his son, grandsons, ministers and governors must be distributed according to his own best judgment.'[704]

Norris in his first meeting with Aurangzeb, presented 'Twelve carts on which were carried 12 brass cannon as presents. Five hackeries, with the cloths, etc., for presents. 100 cahars and Messuris, carrying the glass-ware and looking-glasses for presents. Two fine Arabian horses, richly caparisoned and two others without caparisons for presents.'[705] Norris believed that the presents were well-received. He records that Aurangzeb impressed by the English King's presents, issued an order that the gifts sent by the King were to be kept for his own use. The Emperor examined them carefully and '…took patterns himself of every separate piece of cloth and brocade and kept them; had account taken of all the glass ware, sword-blades, etc…The cloth he most admired was stripped and flowered, he "never having seen any before". The horses presented to him by Norris Aurangzib ordered to be taken to his own stable. They were very fine creatures, and one of them was caparisoned with "rich saddle & furniture & covering embroidr'd with Gold on scarlett cloth"; and another with "saddle & furniture of crimson & velvet richly embroidered with Gold".[706] Further, Aurangzeb had commanded some of the gifts to be sent to his harem so that the ladies could themselves have a look at them.[707] He particularly ordered for a small pair of pocket screw-barrel pistols to be put in his bed-chamber.[708] The manner in which the Mughal Emperor received the gifts had assured the English ambassador that 'the gifts greatly enhanced the value of the remaining presents as well as the reputation of the Ambassador'.[709]

[704] Ibid., p. 86.
[705] Ibid., p. 311.
[706] Ibid., p. 313.
[707] Loc. cit..
[708] Ibid., p. 313-2.
[709] Ibid., p. 314.

The officials of the European trading Companies in their attempt to secure trading rights and concessions from the Mughal Emperor with the passage of time and experiences realized the relevance of offering lavish and rare gifts to the Emperor and to the royal members and also to his nobles. When Aurangzeb had reached very close to Golconda with the intention to annex it, the officials from the Dutch Company who had gone to meet the Mughal Emperor with gifts was given an audience by Aurangzeb and a farman was granted, giving permission to carry on their commercial activities. Encouraged by the success of the Dutch embassy at the Mughal court, the English Governor and Council at Madras too decided to send an ambassador who was an Armenian merchant located at Madras. And since the English and the Mughals were not sharing any cordial relation in Bengal and at Surat, therefore it was also decided to offer expensive gifts so as to appease the Emperor.[710]

However, just as some were encouraged at the scope of obtaining trade benefits from the Mughal Emperor through the means of the presentation of lavish gifts, there were others who felt disheartened at such a fierce competition of arranging magnificent presents and consequently, surpassing other competitors. The French Company official, M. Ceberet had to discard his plan of visiting the Mughal court on the considerations that for the audience of the Mughal Emperor, he would have to take expensive gifts which would incur a huge expenditure. Besides, there was also a fear of competition from Johannes Bacherus, the deputy of the Dutch Commissioner-General who was sent to the court of the Mughals with rich gifts and glittering embassy. And there was a probability of arriving at the same time as the Dutch envoy if M. Ceberet had wished to visit the Mughal court. It would have been difficult for him 'to compete with his Dutch counterpart either in the sumptuousness of his entourage or the lavishness of the gifts made to the Emperor and members of the court nobility. As a result, perhaps, the welcome given to Ceberet would lack the warmth of that accorded to the Dutch.'[711]

[710] *Memoirs of Francois Martin*, vol. II, Part I, p. 1044.
[711] Ibid., pp. 1102-3.

Also, to offer rare and expensive gifts to the Mughal Emperor and some chief nobles of the court was not sufficient in achieving the aims of a diplomatic mission. Norris realized that in order to forward the affairs of the mission at the court, appeasing some important Mughal officials was not enough but 'there was the problem of appeasing the underlings, who always took undue advantage of their privileged position. It was equally impossible to determine whether they had been genuinely commissioned by their superiors to do a certain thing, and how far they represented affairs to their masters as they really were'.[712] Once a chief eunuch of the Wazir visited Norris's camp and asked for 'two "cases of spirits" ' in the name of the Wazir's Secretary.[713]

One very vital component of the gift-giving ceremony was reciprocity when the ceremony was performed between two equal parties.[714] The failure to reciprocate meant the failure to maintain one's social rank, prestige and honour. Because of this, in cases like this, the recipient of gifts would strive to give gifts either of equal value or of superior value so that his rank remained intact or it was elevated. Even when there was any political tension evident between the two rulers, the reciprocation of gifts and formalities was meticulously observed. When Aurangzeb received an offensive letter from the Shah of Persia, Shah Abbas I, rebuking him for usurping his father's regal power, Aurangzeb made Budaq Beg, the ambassador stay at his court for about four or five months, gave a huge amount of money for his personal expenses which enabled the ambassador to live sumptuous. His grand nobles profusely organized lavish entertainments for him. When finally he was allowed to leave the court, he was presented with a rich robe of honour again along with other expensive gifts for him and choice gifts for the Shah.[715]

The basis for such a lavish treatment accorded to the Persian ambassador in spite of having received a discourteous letter from the Persian Shah was the requirement on

[712] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 271.
[713] Ibid., p. 271.
[714] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift, The form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, Routledge, London and New York, 1990, p. 11.
[715] Bernier, pp. 148-9.

behalf of the Mughal Emperor to reciprocate the ceremony of gift-giving on the eve of his accession to the Mughal throne. The coronation event and the receiving of foreign embassies with a congratulatory letter addressed to the new Emperor along with appropriate gifts especially from important territories like that of Persia was a confirmation of their acceptance and approval of the new regime of their contemporary ruler. Acquiring a social rank was not adequate enough; getting it recognized by others was of more relevance. 'The recognition of membership by others constitutes membership.'[716] The Shah of Persia had sent Aurangzeb after his coronation 'sixty-six Iraqi and Arab horses with ornate trappings, pearls, diamonds, a glittering round pearl weighing 36 *qirats* which the jewellers valued as worth sixty thousand rupees, and other costly products of Iran. The total value of the presents on the behalf of the Shah amounted to five *lakh* of rupees.'[717] Bernier, who himself was dazzled by the richness and exquisiteness of the sent gifts, had recorded that the Mughal Emperor 'seemed unusually pleased with his splendid present; he examined every item minutely, noticed its elegance and rarity, and frequently extolled the munificence of the King of Persia.'[718]

Secret Gifts

There were some secret gifts too given to Mughal officials by the envoys. Norris writes, 'The Generality of all the prime Ministers & officers here are soe greate Lovers of English spirits yt nothinge is soe acceptable to ym or soe greate a present, but a case of these spirits cannot be given in private to one but another knows it, they have such spys upon one another & soe many upon me'. For example, a few days before, Norris had ordered Mr. Mill to present Mahmud Aqil secretly with two cases of spirits; and in order that no Indian servant might find it out, the cases were wrapped up in a cloth and sent without anybody being told. Yet next day the Qazi sent and begged for a bottle, seeing that Norris had given two cases to Mahmud Aqil. Two cases of spirits were privately sent

[716] Roger Chartier, *Cutural History : Between Practices and Representation*, tr. Lydia G. Cochrane, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988, p. 87.
[717] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 176.
[718] Bernier, pp. 147-8.

to the Qazi as well. So careful was Barahmand Khan in receiving the spirits, and so anxious if possible to keep the gift a secret, that he sent two of his own servants to carry cases away at midnight with all secrecy.[719]

The Mughal envoys were also given gifts and such lures clandestinely. In 1603 when Asad Beg as a Mughal Envoy of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar was sent to the court of the Bijapur ruler, Ibrahim Adil Shah, he was offered 200,000 pagodas to lengthen his stay at the Bijapur court which the ambassador declined to take. Before him, Mir Jamal, a former Mughal Ambassador was sent by Akbar when the Emperor was at Burhanpur engaged in a campaign against Ahmadnagar for arranging a matrimonial alliance between the daughter of Ibrahim Adil Shah and the son of Akbar, Prince Daniyal. The said ambassador was retained at the Bijapur court through the means of three to four thousand pagodas every year, thus delaying his return year after year which, in turn, delayed the matrimonial alliance to materialize.[720] The lure of gifts (in cash) aided Ibrahim Adil Shah to accomplish what he could not do by force.[721]

However, sometimes the Mughal officials would too try to form a secret alliance with the ambassador, stimulating the Emperor to grant some favour upon the Mughal official and in return, the official would aid him in attaining the success of the embassy. The English ambassador, Sir William Norris discovered that Ghulam Mahmud, the son of the deputy *Wazir*, Arshad Khan wanted to 'secure the Ambassador's influence with the Emperor so as to gain for himself the Governorship of Surat, then held by Diyanat Khan'.[722]

Lethal Gifts

After the Khan-i-Khanan, Muazzam Khan subjugated Assam, the ruler of the territory agreed to pay tribute. He sent his envoy, Badli Phukan with the khan-i-Khanan with choice gifts of rare silk-products, elephants, etc., and also his own daughter for the

[719] *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 306.
[720] *Wikaya-i-Asad Beg*.
[721] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics*, Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 197.
[722] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 269.

Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb. But on their way they encamped on the outskirts of Jahangirnagar (Dacca), and it is here that the health of the Khan-i-Khanan was affected badly. He complained of accelerated pain in his heart and liver which was worsened day by day. Finally he breathed his last on 30th March, 1663. The author, Ghulam Husain Salim ascribed the death of the Khan-i-Khanan to the sorcery of the Assamese which, he believed, was rampant in the territory. Though now the Mughal official, Khan-i-Khanan was dead and the outlying posts were abandoned by the garrisons of the outposts, the daughter of the Assamese ruler was not taken back. She was left behind with the tribute for the Mughal Emperor.[723]

Salutations

The form of salutation performed (whether conforming to the mode practiced at the host country's court or go by the one which was in vogue at the court of the ambassador's native country) was equally a valuable matter. Usually the ambassador at the Mughal court had to perform salutations as per the Mughal style. The performance of salutation was not mere an act of bowing but it carried a range of deep-rooted meanings. The potency of salutation or greeting lies in the fact that it 'becomes a mode of entering upon or manipulating a relationship in order to achieve a specific result.'[724]

The mode of salutation reflected the relations the performer had with the one he performed it for. When the two rulers were on equal standing, their ambassadors would perform salutations as per their native mode. Nevertheless, all attempts were made to induce the ambassador to pay obeisance as per the custom observed at the court of the host. Shah Jahan once determined to make a Persian ambassador salute him in the Mughal way had decided to give the envoy the imperial audience at the *am-khas* by letting the grand entrance closed, leaving only a wicket open. The Persian ambassador finding no other way possible for him to enter the court had to use the wicket which was

[723] *Riaazu-s-Salatin, A History of Bengal*, pp. 225-6.
[724] Esther Goody, 'Greetings, Begging and the Presentation of Respect, ed. J.S. La Fontane, *The Interpretation of Ritual: Essays in Honour of A. I. Richards*, London, 1972, p. 40.

so low that it was unfeasible to use it without stooping and covering one's head just as it was required to do while performing a Mughal salutation. The Persian ambassador perceiving the intention entered the court with his back facing the *durbar*. Seeing his design foiled, the vexed Emperor said, "*Eh-bed-bakt* (Ah, wretch!) didst thou imagine thou wast entering a stable of asses like thyself?" The ambassador replied, "I did imagine it. Who, on going like through such a door, can believe he is visiting any but asses?"[725]

On the other hand, when the salutation was performed by the subordinate rulers, it had to be executed with proper reverence to the Emperor, for it expressed his subjugated position. Pietro Della Valle described the way Adil Shah, the ruler of Golconda who had to pay annual tributes to Shah Jahan would receive the imperial letter, performing salutations as if he was in the presence of the Emperor himself:

> When the Moghol sends any Letter to him, which is always brought by some very ordinary common Souldier, or Slave, he goeth forth with his whole Army to meet the Letter and him that brings it, who being conducted to the Palace sits down there, whilst Adil-Sciah stands all the time, and the letter being lay'd upon a Carpet on the pavement, before he offers to put forth his hand to take it up, he bows himself three times to the earth, doing reverence to it after their manner.[726]

Only on very rare occasions, the envoy was exempted from the required protocol. Norris was advised by one of the experienced person who was well-versed with the Mughal court procedures that on being given the audience to him by the Mughal Emperor, he was to do the salutation practiced in his country, i.e., 'might make only one low bow' but on the occasion when 'the Emperor favoured him with a serpaw, or robe of honour, three bows must be made.'[727] However, through negotiations, he along with his entourage was permitted to perform the salutation to the Emperor as per his native custom when they were allowed to come to the Mughal darbar.

[725] Bernier, pp. 151-2.
[726] Pietro Della Valle, p. 151.
[727] *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 211.

Diplomatic visits to Royal Princes, Nobles

Envoys were exchanged between the Emperor and royal members as well. In matters of very delicate issues, royal ladies too had acted as an envoy or a spokesperson for the Emperor. When during war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb was encamped at *Bagh-i-Dhira*, located at the outskirt of the capital, Akbarabad, Princess Jahanara, mounted on an elephant and with the task of delivering the royal message, i.e., to abandon the path of sedition and to offer an imperial proposal of the division of the Empire into five parts[728], had marched to the camps of Aurangzeb and Muhammad Murad Baksh. But there's a difference of opinion concerning the kind of reception she received at *Bagh-i-Dhira* on reaching her brothers' camps. Ishwardas Nagar[729] described the reception to *Begam Sahiba* (Jahanara Begum) was accentuated with high regards and respect. To meet the brothers, as soon as she arrived at the *Bagh-i-Dhira*, in the words of the author, 'they getting the news of the arrival of the Lady of the World, came out of the encampment (daulat Khana) to accord her welcome. With all due respect they conducted her to (the encampment).'[730] However, another contemporary historian had recorded, 'When she approached Aurangzeb's residence, she was not received and welcomed with the honour and respect usually paid to her, and at the instance of Aurangzeb she was led into the private apartments. But at the personal interview in the harem Aurangzeb met her in a proper manner and offered her a seat of distinction.'[731]

Embassies were sent not only to the Emperor but also to important nobles. When Daud Khan was the governor of the Karnatik, a Dutch embassy was sent to him with an expensive gift. The ambassador wanted the governor to 'cede to them a small town called

[728] As per the author of the *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri*, Aqil Khan Razi, the proposal of Shah Jahan was to assign the Punjab and the attached terrains to Dara Shikoh, Gujarat was to remain under the ownership of Muhammad Murad Baksh. Similarly, Shah Shuja was also to continue ruling over the province of Bengal. Sultan Muhammad was to be given the Deccan. Shah Jahan was willing to declare Aurangzeb as the heir-apparent of the rest of the whole Empire and also to grant him the dignified title of 'Buland Iqbal'. *The Waqiat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 28.

[729] Ishwardas Nagar claimed that he had personally eye-witnessed many happenings of Aurangzeb's reign. Besides, he also gathered information from his patron in his writing who was the Chief Qazi of the Empire and who surely might have been a part of the royal entourage in camp and at court.

[730] *Futuhat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 36.

[731] *The Waqiat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 28.

Coniumeri (Conimere or Kunimedu), close to the sea and five leagues from Pondicherry on the north. The place was granted to them…'[732]

Nobles too employed envoys in several matters. For instance, they were sent to the court of the opponents in times of war or before war to bring about some conciliation. In the third regnal year of Jahangir, the Emperor had granted the *Nizamat* of the *subah* of Bengal to Islam Khan who was strictly instructed to crush the Afghan rebellion raised by Osman Khan. In accordance with the imperial order, Islam Khan sent a huge army. On reaching the borders of the territory under the leader of the Afghan rebellion, an envoy was sent to dissuade Osman Khan for conciliation but the envoy was asked to leave without accomplishing his assigned task.[733]

In court society every minute aspect concerning one's demeanour was scrutinized by one another. Their speech, gifts, dress, food and many other things were indeed a mode of communication among the members of the court. These were more significantly monitored when there was an interaction between the members of the two or more courts. For instance, feasting was one of the ways to demonstrate generosity of the individual organizing such gatherings and it also enabled the host to forge alliances because the hosts and the invitees share, assist and cooperate with each other.[734] These were the opportune opportunity for the rulers especially possessing equal political status and therefore they would grab any chance to outclass as well as make an impression on their guests by holding magnificent feasts. On being exiled from Hindustan, Humayun had to take refuge in Persia. The Shah of Persia, Shah Tahmasp had severely instructed through the royal order addressed to the Persian governor of Heart to greet him with 'all honours due to such a king', organizing feasts and providing amusements every day.[735] Further

[732] *Storia*, vol. IV, p. 204.
[733] *Riyazu-s-Salatin*, pp. 173-5.
[734] Marcel Mauss, pp. 77-8.
[735] *Contemporary Dutch Chronicle of Mughal India*, p. 8.

thorough commands were issued to Muhammad Khan, the governor of Sabzwar for holding grand feasts in the honour of Humayun.[736]

Like Humayun, Prince Muhammad Akbar who after his rebellion against his father, Aurangzeb, had too found an asylum in Persia and he was also accorded a magnificent treatment. The Persian Shah, Shah Sulaiman issued orders to his state officials to make an arrangement of all the things the prince was habituated in his father's realm. The Prince was especially offered food items of his native place such as mangoes, betel, pine-apples, etc.[737]

Dress was another factor which expressed social distinctiveness and *social status* categorizations in a courtly society and therefore, from the Emperor to everyone who received his audience at his court was to be dressed appropriately according to his station. The ambassadors coming to the court and the European contemporary writers, awestruck especially by the rich collection of royal jewels and their use in royal attires, had not failed to capture the magnificent sight which was presented to them.[738]

The attire worn by the ambassador had to be presentable for receiving the audience at the court. There were protocols even for the ambassadors regarding the way they were to be dressed and appear before the Emperor. Roe mentioned that he had taken permission beforehand to wear the dress of his own country.[739] When the embassy from Pegu[740] arrived at the camp of one of the Mughal officials, Daud Khan, they were forbidden to advance further as their clothes were deemed not appropriate and were asked to change those. 'When the ambassadors found that their progress to the court was barred, they decided to dress themselves in another way. They ordered some fine clothes and put shoes on their feet, covering their heads with a hat of straw having extended and rather

[736] *The Akbar Nama*, vol. I, pp. 423-27.
[737] *Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-al Lubab*, p. 310.
[738] Roe, p. 322.
[739] Ibid., p. 69.
[740] Pegu was a capital city of the Mon Kingdom, also called Hanthwaddy Kingdom in Myanmar (Burma) from the ninth century to the eleventh century and for a brief period in the mid-18th century. See Encyclopedia Britannica: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/448792/Pegu

wide wings, of which the lacquered crown was in shape something like a reversed flower-pot. Pictures of them thus attired were sent to his Majesty. Thus accoutered…they were sent on to court.'[741] If Manucci is to be believed, then sometimes such things were set up in order to increase the prestige of the court. Accordingly, Daud Khan was instructed by the aging Emperor to do so with a purpose 'that the ambassadors and agents of different princes, as also the spies of various rajahs who are found in numbers at the court, should be able to write to their princes that to his (Aurangzeb's) court had come ambassadors from a strange king bringing a magnificent present' and thus, it was his devise 'to make a display of his greatness and that he would be looked on as a mighty potentate, a reputation which he desires to have'. [742]

From the mode of donning a dress to its colour was also a subject of expressing superiority over the other. Once a Persian ambassador of Shah Abbas II was asked by a Mughal *Wazir*, 'Which is the better, to wear on your head a white turban, the sign of modesty and gravity, or, instead, one of cloth of gold, as is usual among the ladies of this court?' The ambassador replied that 'He had seen many ladies of the court who, when they visited him, covered their lower parts with exquisitely fine white cloth, just as with their turbans the nobles of the court covered their heads'.[743]

The Mughal court painters were commissioned to capture some diplomatic missions from important territories to far-flung corners of the world who had come to the court, underlining the grandeur of the Empire. In '*Europeans bring gifts to Shah Jahan*', painted in 1650 by an unknown artist at Agra, there are images of some Europeans who are shown with gifts they had brought for the Emperor[744], and placed beyond the first railing. Their physical statures appear to be smaller than that of the Mughal courtiers. Then there is another called '*Shah Jahan receives the Persian ambassador, Muhammad-*

[741] *Storia do Mogor*, vol. IV, p. 257.
[742] Ibid., vol. IV, p. 258.
[743] Ibid., vol, IV, p. 245.
[744] *The Padshahnama*, pp. 56-7.

Ali Beg',[745] capturing the occasion when the Persian envoy had come to the imperial court. The artist is a 'Kashmiri painter', painted it in1633.

Thus the exchange of embassies was of extreme relevance in the Mughal courtly culture which enabled the Emperor to form alliances and to establish and renew the relations with the rulers of the neighbouring as well as distant territories. The diplomatic exchanges also brought cultural interactions as we see in the case of the Jesuits Fathers and European ambassadorial visits to the court. Their gifts, mainly consisting of books, paintings and pictures dealing with the Christian themes (also discussed in the first and second chapters), opened up the world of a complete new source for the Emperor to tap in order to expand the base for obtaining legitimacy for their power. Not only this, the regular reception and dispatching of the ambassadors facilitated him to keep his provincial governors and also his courtiers disciplined, for they were entrusted with different tasks of various nature, starting from the *istiqbal* ceremony to the conclusion of the mission. And the one who was selected as the diplomat to a foreign territory was to render his task successfully and faithfully. A failed diplomatic mission meant a prologue to disruption in amiable relations between the two territories or even to accelerate the already tensed environment or the worst of all, to provoke the host ruler to commence a war with the ruler of the visiting ambassador. One of the reasons for the Battle of Karnal fought in 1739 between the Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah and the ruler of Persia, Nadir Shah was owing to the failure of the diplomatic missions between them which will be discussed in the last chapter.

[745] Ibid., p. 53.

Figure 4.1

Shahbaz Khan Kambo smoking a huqqa, Deccan, mid. 17th Century

Nauras: The Many Arts of the Deccan, 27 January-20April 2015

National Museum, New Delhi

The *Wikaya-i-Asad Beg* records that the introduction of the practice of smoking *huqqa* to the Mughal court was the result of the exchange of diplomatic representatives. After returning from the court of Adil Shah, the ruler of Bijapur, the Mughal diplomat, Asad Beg offered the *huqqa* to Akbar and also to several other nobles.

Shahbaz Khan Kambo was a high-ranking noble, appointed in the Deccan.

CHAPTER V

> The Mughals had no sedentary lifestyle. They were fond of camp life and were often rotating from one metropolis to another. They even called their fort as *urdu-i-mualla* or Great Camp.[746] The Mughal camp was set on the model of the imperial capital and its palace but the only difference was the imperial camp was not as massive as the imperial capital.[747] However, its grandeur was no diminutive. The Mughal Emperors spent enormous time of their reign in camping. The mobile court was a common feature of their royal lifestyle. Daily royal duties were performed by the Emperor even when he was on the move. Whether the empire was in its formative phase or golden age[748], camping was never restrained. A Mughal camp was spread over a huge expanse of land. Bernier is of the opinion that 'this space measures more than two leagues, or perhaps two leagues and a half in circumference' excluding the space occupied by 'the heavy artillery, which requires a great deal of room, is commonly a day or two in advance of the army',[749] while Careri is of the opinion that 'the whole Camp was thirty Miles about'.[750]

Even Timur, their renowned ancestor was more habituated to live in camps than living at his palaces. Though he owned luxurious palaces, yet they were used frequently as prisons and treasure houses. When stationed at his capital, he would hold his court in gardens.[751] Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador to his court had noted, 'In the garden there were many tents, and awnings of red cloth, and of various coloured silks, some embroidered in various ways, and other plain.'[752]

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[746] *Mughal Miniatures*, Texts and Notes by Rai Krishnadasa, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1955, Plate 2.
[747] R. Nath, *Private Life of the Mughals of India (1526-1803 A.D.)*, Rupa & Co., 2005, p. 180.
[748] It was only when there was a shift in power position as per which some powerful nobles in the later Mughal period emerged as more dominant than the reigning later Mughal Emperor that restrictions were put on their movement and camping.
[749] Bernier, p. 367.
[750] Thevenot & Careri, p. 218.
[751] Clavijo, p. 136
[752] Ibid., p. 136.

Babur, the founder of the Empire, too had spent his enormous life span in camps and therefore, many of the miniature paintings of the *Baburnama* had him depicted outdoors. But the manner of camping underwent a tremendous change in the times of grand Mughal Emperors. Until he had defeated Ibrahim Lodi, there were a lot of uncertainties; many of his men had deserted or threatened to desert him at Samarqand[753]. After losing Andizhan and Samarqand and by the time he had approached Kabul, we already observe instances of comradeship he had developed and shared with his remaining supporters. And since owing to the hardships and rugged camp life and the dangers it entailed, therefore, the relation he had established with them was not that of dominance and subjugation as was evident from the reign of his grandson. Babur was found to be involved in tasks which in glorious phase of the Empire were considered inappropriate even for a prince to undertake. For Babur his men were his comrades and "Death with friends is a feast".[754]

There were four primary occasions when the Mughals would camp. The first occasion was when they were engaged in battles, the other was the pleasure trips. They would also go on hunt from metropolis to a near-by hunting ground in camp or even on the way to a certain location while camping for a pleasure trip or a battle. For the purpose of visiting a pilgrimage, camping was undertaken too. Camping could take a longer or shorter duration, depending upon the number of halts taken to reach the destination and also the location of the destination and the route taken to reach it.

Tents

For encampment the Mughals had tents of different ranges. Its multitude, size and even colour, etc., all signalled its splendour. There were tents for shorter and longer journeys, for hunting expeditions, for military operations, for pleasure trips and when a prince or a noble was appointed to a new province. A department called *farrash-khanah* was especially allotted for the repairs of tents, furniture, carpets, etc.[755] A large Mughal

[753] Babur had ruled in Samarqand for the span of one hundred days. *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, p. 65.
[754] Ibid., p. 234.
[755] R. Nath, *Private life*, p. 157.

encampment was something like a mobile Mughal metropolis: it was furnished with almost everything they required when stationed at their capital.[756]

Timur would often encamp in many gardens which he owned. In a garden called 'Dilicaya', 'the lord ordered many tents to be pitched for himself and his women ; and that all his host, which was scattered in detachments over the land, should be assembled together, each man in his place, and that their tents should be pitched'.[757] Babur and Humayun would have tents pitched outside his palace or fort on occasions of grand festivities, just as Timur would do. Large tents were pitched to organize feasts and banquets. The tents of Timur were famous for their magnificence. 'These tents and doors were all of red cloth, and they were so rich and so well made, that they cannot be described by writing, and they cannot be imagined without being seen.'[758]In spite of the massiveness of the tents, occupying a vast expanse of land, every prince, noble, mansabdar, and soldiers knew their allocated place. The Spanish ambassador to the court of Timur while speaking about the order in the camp, wrote, 'When the tents of the lord were pitched, and every one, high and low, knew his place, so that the work was done without confusion or noise. After three or four days, twenty thousand men were assembled round the tents of the lord, and a day did not pass without many arriving from all parts.'[759]

Khawandamir had described a camp scene when Humayun was stationed at Gwalior and had ordered for a grand feast, outside the Gwalior fort:

> The clever lascars pitched in this green plane, which resembled the heavens, a very large tent made of fne red woollen cloth. Close to its portico was also erected the tent of the movable palace, the top of which touched the Gemini and the Pleiades. The tent of twelve signs was also raised for His Majesty's residence, and the tops of the royal pavilions, which were also pitched, reached the seventh heaven. Large tents of red velvet, which were erected above the tent of twelve signs, cast their shadows on the blue sky; and the embroidered canopies

[756] Bernier, pp. 221-2.
[757] Clavijo, p. 140.
[758] Ibid., p. 162.
[759] Ibid., p. 140.

> of different colours were extended, and their shadows spreading all over protected the world from the force (of heat) of the Sun. The nobles, the pillars of the State, the courtiers, the headmen, ministers and *Wazirs*, and all the servants of the sublime throne also pitched their tents of all colours, and extended their beautiful canopies round the royal pavilion.[760]

Tents in the times of Humayun had undergone innovations brought by the Emperor himself. Humayun was fond of astrology and one can trace the influence of it in many of his innovations. He had a large tent of 12 signs. It was actually a tent, comprising of 12 compartments with latticework, corresponding to the signs of the Zodiac. The tents of various colours were like 'the units of movable palace, and transported from one stage to another.[761]

Camps and its paraphernalia and equipage became enormously vast and elaborate by the reign of Akbar. Abul Fazl while describing Mughal encampment admitted that it was beyond his capability to describe a large encampment and so, he had explained the tents which were made use of during a short journey or on a hunting spree. The *Gulal-bar* was one of the grand tents, secured with very sturdy doors and locks and keys. The tent was the invention of Akbar. It was 'never less than one hundred yards square.' Its eastern end had a pavilion with two entrances, 54 divisions, 24 yards long and 14 broad. In the middle of it, stood a huge *chubin ra,oti*, around which there was a *sara-parda*. Next to it (*chubin ra,oti*) was a two-storied pavilion where Akbar would pray. Then there were twenty-four chubin ra,otis, 10 yards long and 6 yards wide, each separated by a canvas. It was here that the royal ladies lived.[762]

Pitching of a crimson tent on the march was exclusively reserved for the Emperor. However, there were occasions when this exclusive privilege was showered upon the Emperor's most favoured son or the heir apparent. During the second year of Jahangir's reign, i.e. in 1607 at the age of fifteen, Prince Khurram was granted with the rank of

[760] *Qanun-i-Humayuni (also known as Humayun Nama) of Khwandamir*, p. 75.
[761] Ibid., p. 48.
[762] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 47.

8,000 and he was also permitted to pitch a red tent when camping.[763] Shah Jahan had granted this rare privilege to his heir-apparent.[764]

The rich and abundant imperial tents were erected not only when the emperor was camping but it was used for several other purposes as well such as on the occasion of feasts. When Humayun had returned safely from Chunar, Maham Begam threw a grand feast.[765] A large audience hall was made with the aid of an exquisite tent; the insides of which was embellished with European brocade while the outside had Portuguese cloth. The covering of the pavilions too had a similar style of embellishment. Every detail was taken into consideration. A tent-lining, kannat (tent walls) and sar-i-kannat of Gujarati cloth-of-gold were matched beautifully with a ewer for rose-water, candlesticks, drinking-vessels and rose-water sprinklers in jewelled gold. Even the tent-poles were gilded and extremely ornamental.[766]

Now scattered in museums around the world, Mughal imperial tent hangings, like the imperial court are a marvelous specimen of Mughal art. Just as the architectural space of the court at imperial capital cities was utilized to adorn with manicured garden motifs, inducing Paradise effect, the similar strategy was applied to decorate the tent panels. One such Mughal tent hanging is at the Indian Subcontinent Gallery of the National Gallery of Australia.[767] It is acquired by the museum in recent times in the year 2013 and was one of the objects put on display in the British Library's exhibition, titled *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire*. One special feature of this tent hanging is the application of the fine chain-stitch silk embroidery[768] and subtle quilting on the splendid red cotton backdrop. Therefore, it is celebrated as a significant collection.

Just as the mansion of a prince could not be as lavish and magnificent as that of the Emperor or a noble's mansion was not to exceed in grandness as that of a prince, thus

[763] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 5.
[764] Ibid., p. 119.
[765] Annette S. Beveridge speculates the feast to be the first anniversary of Humayun's accession. Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun Nama* p. 114.
[766]Ibid., p. 113.
[767] Artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=239395
[768] Even though there were royal embroidery workshops, embroideries on tent hanging were not a frequent element for embellishing it which is why the ones found with embroidery are deemed as rare and exquisite.

maintaining the distinction of ranks and status, similarly, the tents of every personage varied according to the rank they enjoyed in the aristocratic circle. The tents of a prince, a noble and a soldier had constraints put by the Emperor and they were to comply with. The tents of nobles were, nevertheless, also of no mean appearance. Bernier noticed how much pride the nobles took in the 'loftiness of their tents but took care that it did not exceed that of the royal tents.[769] When Hamilton reached Thatta, one of the Mughal provinces, he was invited by the viceroy as he wanted to talk over the matter concerning the robbery of the governor's Kafila and killings of his men by the infamous Baluchis and Mackrans.

> We were lodged in a large convenient Houfe of 15 Rooms, and had good Warehoufes. The Stairs from the Street, were intire Porphyry, of 10 Foot long, of a bright yellow Colour, and as fmooth as Glafs. They were about 10 in Number, and led up to a Square of 15 Yards long, and about 10 broad. Next Day we had a Compliment from the Nabob, of an Ox, five Sheep, as many Goats, twenty Fowls and fifty Pigeons, with Sweetmeats and Fruit in Abundance. He, at that Time, lay encamp about fix Miles from the Town, with an Army of 8 or 10000 Men, with a Defign to punifh the Ballowches and Mackrans for robbing the Caffilla, and killing his Men, as is before mentioned…he accordingly fent twenty fine *Perfian* Horfes, well equipp'd, for my Ufe, ten of which I accepted for myfelf and Guard to mount, and the other ten were mounted with fome of the moft confiderable Merchants in *Tatta*, who went to accompany me out of Refect ; and, to make our Cavalcade appear with the greater Grace, affoon as we came out to the Camp Gate, we would have alighted, but an Officer on Horfeback told us, that it was the *Nabob*'s Pleafure, that we fhould be brought to his Tent on Horfe-back, and he riding before us, conducted us to the Tent Door, and, affoon as we got from our Horfes, I was conducted into his own Pavilion Chamber, where he was fitting alone. The reft that came with me, were not admitted for an Hour after. It would take a great Deal of Time and Room to relate the Compliments and other Difcourfes that paft ; but I knew the Cuftom, not to appear before great Men with an empty Hand. I defired Leave to lay a little Prefent at his Feet, which he permitted. It confifted of a Looking-glafs of about 5 Pounds in Value, a Gun and

[769] Bernier, p. 360.

> a Pair of Piftols well gilded, a Sabre Blade and Dagger-blade gilded, and a Glafs Pipe for his Tobacco, and an embroider'd Standifh for it to ftand in. He then fent for all who had accompanied me into the Room, and fhewed the Prefent I had made him, magnifying every Piece of it ; and after fome Ecomiums on my Valour and Generofity…[770]

While describing the tent of Nazir Daulat, a eunuch in the times of Aurangzeb, Manucci wrote, 'His tent was like a general's, and in his suite were noble horsemen'.[771] The observation of Norris on the camp of Aurangzeb's *Wazir*, Asad Khan is not very flattering.

"There was nothinge but confusion in their Enchampmt no order or Regularity but everybody raising a little mud Hutt as he thought convenient for himself & his family."[772] In fact in comparison to the tent of the Wazir, the English ambassador's tent was so striking that when he was encamped at Brahmapuri 'vast crowds of people of all classes flocked daily to see Norris's imposing camp… Even senior officers of the Mughal Army came to inspect his encampment; Norris declared with evident pride and delight that they had never seen anything like it before, nor had they seen anything in the *Wazir's* or Prime Minister's camp to be compared with his State tent, which they all specially admired. On some days, indeed, the attentions of the staring crowd became so embarrassing that Norris was forced to retire and close the tent doors.[773]

Preparations

Camping required a lot of beforehand preparations and when it was undertaken for a longer duration and on a massive scale where a sea of men (from grandees to local men looking for some opportunity to earn profits out of the imperial service in the camp) accompanied the imperial camp, planning was definitely called for. Before embarking on a certain selected destination or selecting the site for halting, certain considerations had to

[770] *A New Account of the East-Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Alexander Hamilton from the years 1688 to 1723, Trading and Travelling by Sea and Land, to Most of the Countries and Islands of Commerce and Navigation, Between the Cape of Good-Hope and the Island of Japan*, vol. I, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, reprint 1995, pp. 118-20.
[771] *Storia*, vol. IV, pp. 210-11.
[772] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 255.
[773] Ibid., p. 263.

be taken into account so that there would be no difficulties concerning time, chosen course, weather, provisions, followers, etc.

Auspicious Moment

The Mughals had a lot of faith in astrology. Astrologers were consulted to fix the fortunate date to commence the construction of a new fort or metropolis or for important occasions like the coronation and marriage ceremonies.[774] Likewise, an auspicious time was fixed by astrologers and astronomers for the march and in accordance with the decided date the camp would commence on the day. Inayat Khan had recorded the departure of the imperial camp of Shah Jahan from the metropolis and its arrival to the metropolis at a fortunate hour, '…in a chosen moment, the world-illuminating standards set out from Akbarabad towards the Panjab', 'On the last day of Sha'ban 1059 (17 September 1649), in a chosen moment, the departure of the ever-victorious standards from Kabul to the capital of Lahore took place'.[775] But in some difficult circumstances when starting the march of the imperial camp could not take place, another date was again fixed. Or at times, only the advance camp or *paishkhana* would be sent on the day which was selected for the commencement of the imperial march; the main body of the imperial camp would begin the march on the next fixed date with all royal paraphernalia, banners, and pomp.

Route

Babur, new to the terrain of Hindustan and its surrounding territories and with limited resources, had to march forward after having discussions with his men on many matters. The road to be traversed was one of the issues they discussed. After leaving Heart for Kabul in 1506, as the march progressed, the snow became thicker and thicker. And by the time, he left a place called Chaghcharan 'the snow was so deep it came above the horses'

[774] Even when there was a loss of any precious stones, astrologers had a role to play. So when a pearl worth Rs 14,000 or 15,000 was lost in Jahangir's harem, the astrologer, Jotik Ray had prophesied that it would be found soon in two or three days. Another claimed that it would come from 'a place which was perfectly clean and pure, such as the place of worship or oratory and then the third one announced that a white woman would find it and give it to the Emperor with all joy and happiness. Just after a few days of the incident, a Turkish woman, jubilant at the discovery of the lost precious pearl had brought it to Jahangir. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. II, p. 235.
[775] *Shah Jahan Nama*, pp. 247, 433.

stirrups, and in most places the horses' hooves did not reach the ground. Still it kept on snowing'.[776] And the road after Cheraghdan became absolutely unclear and at Langar-i-Mir Ghiyas they had to think over the possible path they could take to reach Kabul. The situation was so precarious and the vagueness concerning the route to follow was so certain that Babur who had already experienced many adversities, out of utter despair had even composed a verse, voicing his sentiments:

> I and most of the others were of the opinion that since it was winter, the mountain road would be fraught with danger. The Kandahar road, although slightly longer, would be safer. Qasim Beg said that the latter road was too long and we should go by the former. In so saying he made a great mistake, but by that road we went.[777]
>
> Our guide was a Pashai[778] named Sultan. Whether he was too old or fainthearted, or whether because of the depth of the snow, in any case he lost the road and could not guide us. Since it was at Qasim Beg's insistence that we had come by this road, and it reflected upon his honor, he and his sons trampled down the snow, found the road again, and went on ahead. One day the snow was so deep and the road so obscured that no matter what we did we could not go on. There was nothing more for us to do but turn back and camp in a place with firewood. I appointed seventy or eighty warriors to retrace out steps to find and bring to guide us any Hazaras who were wintering in the valley. We did not move from this camp for three or four days until those who had gone out returned. When they did return, they did not bring with them anyone who could show us the way. Trusting in God, we sent Sultan Pashai ahead and set out back down the very road where we had gotten lost. During those few days we endured much hardship and misery, more than I had experienced in my whole life. At that time I composed this line:

[776] *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, p. 232.
[777] Ibid., p. 232.
[778] Pashai are an ethnic group of people primarily from the northeastern regions of Afghanistan.

> Is there any cruelty or misery the spheres can inflict I have not suffered? / Is there any pain or torment my wounded heart has not suffered?[779]

By the time of Akbar, the routes to different places in and around Hindustan and much information with respect to them became known well. He, when camping from one place to another, had the traversed land measured carefully by surveyors which was inspected by the superintendent and inspector.[780] Babur too had the lands as well as riverbanks measured while marching to different places. In 1529, when he was at Chunar, Babur had ordered Moghul Beg to measure the land through which they were passing through and Lufti Beg was instructed to measure the waterside.[781] During camping, Aurangzeb was accompanied by an official who was equipped with all information regarding every patch of land they passed through and whenever the Emperor quizzed him on the provinces, villages and lands he was then traversing, the official immediately satiated His Majesty's curiosity.[782] The contemporary accounts have given details with regard to several courses: the longest, the shortest, the perilous, the passable, the preferable, the preventable and so on and so forth. For example, the distance from Ahmadabad to Ujjain is 98 *kos.*[783] Jahangir had covered it in 28 marches and 41 halts which took him two months and nine days to reach Ujjain.[784]

The Mughal Emperors were very fond of Kashmir[785] and would often go and visit the place for reviving their spirits. Inayat Khan had given four major routes from Lahore which was one of the important metropolises of the Mughals to Kashmir:

> First, there is that of Pakhli, which is 35 stages journey and 150 imperial *kos* long—each *kos* measuring 200 chains, the chain 25 cubits, and the cubit 40 finger-breadths. Although this is the longest, and is full of twists and turns and ascents and declivities, yet the climate along the road is warm, and one can reach

[779] *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, pp. 232-33.
[780] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, p. 417.
[781] *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, p. 441.
[782] Manucci, *Pepys*, p. 105.
[783] One *kos* or *karoh* was equal to 100 *tanabs*. Each *tanab* was equivalent to 50 *Ilahi gaz* or to 400 poles (*bans*). A pole was consisted of 12½ *gaz*. 9 hand-breadths made one larger *gaz* or pace and the smaller one was 3 hand-breadths. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, p. 417.
[784] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 49.
[785] Kashmir was regarded as 'one of the most beautiful countries in the world' by Francois Bernier. Bernier, p. 359.

> Kashmir by it in the very earliest part of spring. The second route is through Chaumukh, which consists of 29 stages and is 102 *kos* long. In this route also, there is little snow, but it lies in one or two places, and on melting makes the ground so unusually wet and slippery that it is difficult to travel around it. One can reach Kashmir this way around the middle of spring. The third route is that of Punch, consisting of 23 marches and 99 imperial *kos* in length. This route has about as much snow on it as the preceding one, and by it one may arrive in Kashmir at the close of spring. The fourth route is through the Pir Panjal, which is 80 imperial *kos* long by the following calculation. From Lahore to Bhimbar, which is an even road all the way, the distance is 8 marches or 33 *kos*; and thence to Kashmir, which is entirely through a mountainous country, 12 marches or 47 *kos*.[786]

What is significant about the description of the four different routes to Kashmir from Lahore by the author is, going to Kashmir for the Mughal Emperor meant going on a pleasure visit and therefore, visiting it during springtime was the best time to be there and the routes described in the above passage tell that following which route would enable the imperial camp to reach at the onset of spring. For Mughals when camping for pleasure, more than perils involved in undertaking a journey, it was important to enjoy the nature in its full blossom. And the reason why that even when the route via the Pir Panjal was better and shorter than the other three ones, still it was not preferred because by the mid May, spring at Kashmir would vanish and the gorgeous sight of flowers like the *lala chughasu* in full bloom could not be enjoyed and the valley would be capped by the freezing snow. The Pir Panjal route was taken when the march to Kashmir would get delayed owing to administrative reasons.

Once the selection of the course was settled on, the nobles and governors were sent to undertake the tasks of clearing the road, making all big and small arrangements to receive the imperial camp. On 9 December 1662 when Aurangzeb moved towards Punjab, Fazil Khan was ordered to march from Karnal along with the karkhanas to Lahore. The Emperor reached Lahore on 9 February by the route of Mukhlispur where he halted for a hunting expedition. Meanwhile Khidmatgar Khan was sent to Kashmir to level the path

[786] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 123.

there for the arriving imperial camp.[787] But clearing the road and making all suitable arrangements by the advance group for the smooth progress of the imperial camp could not be performed every time, for there were occasions when the preferred road had become too difficult to navigate and in consequence, the road chosen for the march had to be switched over to another. On receiving the imperial command for the siege of Qandhar, Aurangzeb in 1649 after arriving at Kohat[788] from Multan, decided to halt here and he had sent an advance party to clear the road and bridges. Khalil Beg who was in charge of the advance camp wrote a letter to Aurangzeb, informing that the road was blacked due to severe snowfall, 'the snow was lying so deep in the road through the hill country along the Khowst route, that even if no more fell, the road would probably not be passable for at least a month'.[789] Aurangzeb had to take a different route now. This time he started for Peshawar via the Sindha-Basta pass and this route was highly rugged and complex.

The right selection of route was very important because a difficult route was definitely punctuated with a high degree of risks and left the travellers fully wearisome. Opting for a difficult road also meant diminishing the pace of the camp. Since the Mughals travelled as per their fixed plans, the speed of the march was certainly a crucial element because when the pace was as much as it was needed, the chances of accomplishing the purpose of camping were higher. Intending to seek pleasure by a visit to Kashmir and arriving there by the end of spring would have surely not pleased the Mughal Emperor or embarking on a military campaign and reaching the location for a campaign at the time

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[787] मुंशी देवीप्रसाद, *औरंगजेबनमा*, अनुवादक और संपादक, कृष्णबीर सिंह, प्रकाश नारायण नाटाणी, ग्रन्थ विकास, जयपुर, २००४, पृ॰ ६५-६६।

[788] Kohat is now a capital city of the Kohat District in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province (formerly the North-West Frontier Province) of Pakistan. Earlier it was a winter capital of Afghanistan.
Babur before coming to Hindustan had raided Kohat at the suggestion of one of his nobles, Baqi Chaghaniani. 'In 910 [1504-05], the year I first came to Kabul, I went through the Khyber to Peshawar intent upon entering Hindustan, but through the machinations of Baqi Chaghaniani we marched farther down to Bangash, that is, Kohat, raided much of Aghanistan, plundered Bannu and Dasht, and came over via Duki.' *Baburnama*, p. 273.
We have one Mughal miniature painting, 'Babur Feasting at Kohat', attributed to the artist, Daulat from the Baburnama manuscript and it was inside the tent that the discussion had occurred on whether to cross the river Indus and enter Hindustan or to invade Kohat. There's another painting named 'Foray to Kuhat (Kohat)', depicting the event. The painting is now kept at the Walters Art Museum at Maryland.

[789] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 426.

when the weather was severe, certainly effected the procurement of men, beasts and food and the morale of the fighting army.

Transportation

The transportation of the Mughal camp was no mean affair. A huge string of animals were employed for the purpose. Father Xavier had remarked about the utilization of huge number of animals in transporting the Mughal tents and luggage in the times of Akbar when the Emperor was returning from Lahore to Agra, 'The King marched in such grand array, that eight hundred elephants and seven thousand camels scarcely sufficed to carry his tents and pavilions ; which is not to be accounted strange, seeing that his Secretary took with him seven hundred camels and seventy elephants.'[790] Bernier too had noted that in Delhi and Agra the Emperor had two to three thousand sturdy horses always geared up along with a multitude of baggage horses, mules and porters for the purpose of carrying ' the numerous and capacious tents, with their fittings, his wives and women, furniture, kitchen apparatus, *Ganges'-water*, and all the other articles necessary for the camp, which the Mogol has always about him, as in his capital, things which are not considered necessary in our kingdoms in Europe.'[791]

There were two sets of tents for the camp—one was an advance tent, always moving ahead of the other and was called *paish-khanah*. These two sets were precisely similar to each other and added greatly to the comfort of camping because an advanced camp meant that the Emperor would not have to wait for a single moment for the pitching of tents and arranging everything as per the requirements and tastes of the Emperor. Wherever he halted, he already had a prepared camp to carry out his kingly duties and functions without any delay or hassles.

Bernier gives an account of how the camp was transported. He recorded that it required more than sixty elephants, two hundred camels, one hundred mules, and one hundred men-porters. The heavy and sizeable things like the huge tents, their heavy poles, etc. were carried on the backs of the elephants while camels were utilized for transmitting the

[790] *Akbar & the Jesuits*, pp. 88-9.
[791] Bernier, pp. 221-2.

smaller tents. The mules carried the luggage and kitchen utensils. The porters were entrusted with the task of carrying the lighter and valuable commodities such as the porcelain used at the Emperor's table, the painted and gilt beds and rich *khargahs* or folding tents.[792]

Aurangezeb who had spent his life mostly camping, had his peshkhana transported by 120 elephants, 1400 camels, and 400 small carts along with many horses and 70 elephants. While 8 other elephants carried 8 chairs, wrought with gold and silver. Three more chairs carried by eight men each. In one of these, the Emperor would sit and travel when he was not mounted on an elephant. When the Emperor was travelling, seated on a chair, the protocol required the nobles to travel on foot. However, they were permitted to mount a horseback when the journey was long.[793]

Topography and Climate

Camping for a distant location meant a long and arduous journey of not some days but months and therefore, it required frequent halts. There could be days when the topography of a place through which or where the royal camp was passing by or halting at had nothing to offer, no greeneries, no pleasant sight to soothe the passers-by, but only barren land and extreme weather to endure.

Yet, the Mughal contemporary historians held a different perspective with regard to extreme climate and surroundings. When Jahangir had gone camping from Lahore, Kami Shirazi had given an account that even unfavourable environs were transformed into a beautiful and pleasant sight owing to the presence of His Majesty. In his words:

> Every stage, where the King encamped, saw such a gathering of beauties that the beautiful garden cast its enormous eyes towards it.
>
> Throughout the night, the torches were kept lighted by his soldiers; the sky fixed its eyes on the earth (to witness the phenomenon).

[792] Ibid., p. 359.
[793] Thevenot & Careri, p. 237.

> With his arrival the desert was turned into a garden and the flower garden enamoured the atmosphere of the forest.[794]

The eulogizing tone of contemporary Persian accounts reminds us that in spite of occasional mishaps and extreme weather conditions and harsh terrain, the Mughals were adept in camping in a truly regal and grand manner. When camping in rugged land, the arabesque containing rich foliage motifs must have provided a respite. The carpets put inside the enclosures formed by the gorgeous tent hangings too were resplendent in floral ornamentations. Besides, if there were unfavourable terrains, there were also some which offered breath-taking views to one's senses.

Pleasant climate was kept in consideration especially when travelling for pleasure visits. This was no different when the Emperor would select his new metropolis. Inayat Khan had described how the Emperor Shah Jahan had selected the site for the Shahjahanabad Fort based on the factors like the suitable climate and topography:

> Several years before, the thought came to His Majesty's omniscient mind that he should select some pleasant site on the banks of the aforesaid river [river Yamuna], distinguished by its genial climate, where he might find a splendid fort and delightful edifices. In accordance with the promptings of his noble nature, he envisioned that streams of water should be made to flow through the proposed fort and that its terraces should overlook the river.[795]

In the springtime in Kashmir, the imperial camp would tour round the gardens, springs and cascades and its suburbs. Mandu was a tremendous delight in rainy seasons, for 'the hills and dales are clothed with lovely verdure and a delightful breeze prevails.'[796] Shah Jahan's father was so enchanted by the beauty of Mandu in rainy season that according to him, 'It is not known if in the inhabited world there exists another such place as Mandu for sweetness of air and for the pleasantness of the locality and the neighbourhood,

[794] *Fathnama-i-Nur Jahan Begam*, p. 116.
[795] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 406.
[796] Ibid., p. 189.

especially in the rainy season…All that could be written would still fall short of the many beauties of the place.'[797]

Alas, Mandu's rainy season was not always a source of delight. Excess of rainfall brought difficulty in the advancement of the imperial march. Jahangir had gone to the fort of Mandu to enjoy hunting in the region. But he could not cover much distance and had to retreat as the mud had become so supple that moving on it was tough. Jahangir had recorded the causalities of 20 inhabitants who had died due to excessive rain, thunder and lightning. There were several buildings which collapsed. To give credence and highlight the severity of the climate, both the great grandfather and the great grandson had injected the statements of old men and therefore, the experienced people, regarding the grave matter. Babur had talked about about his tryst with extreme snowstorm while moving to Kabul in the following words, 'Not even the oldest men with the longest memory could remember this pass having been crossed with the snow so deep; it was not even known whether it had ever occurred to anyone to attempt a crossing at this time of years.'[798] In a similar fashion, over the issue of such heavy rainstorm, Jahangir had emphasized in his memoirs on the grave concern expressed by old men of Mandu who 'did not remember such rain in any age.'[799]

Excessive rainfall was equally a menace for the progress of the royal camp in the reigns of the succeeding Emperors. Shah Jahan with Prince Muhammad Alamgir while travelling back to Lahore had to take a halt on 4 September 1652 at the Bagh-i-Zafar at Peshawar for one week on account of the rising of the river Nilab. On 15 September the imperial camp had arrived on the river banks but continuous rains had further increased the level of the river. The forceful current had destroyed the bridge and thus worsened the possibility of crossing it. Here the camp had to wait for a period of five days until a group of skilled engineers had constructed a bridge with the help of 40 boats at the Jalala ferry. The bridge was entirely ready by 19 September 1652. Similar was the situation when the camp had to cross other rivers like the Jhelam and Chenab. Both were flooded and again bridges were made over the rivers to cross them. The camp reached Jahangirabad and

[797] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 383.
[798] *Baburnama*, p. 235.
[799] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 383.

from here the road to Lahore had become more difficult to cover because of the excessive rainfall. The currents of the principal streams, especially Degh and Bakh-Bacha, had risen so much that they had drowned the permanent bridges there. Some of the men of the advanced camp were drowned. Considering the gravity of the condition the camp had to halt at Jahangirabad also for four days. After days of delays, on 17 October 1562 the camp had started again to march for Lahore.[800]

Harsh and extreme weather conditions were also not avoidable in the upper north, in the *suba* of Kashmir. Whether camping in Kashmir for pleasure visits or for military operations to further north to Kabul, Qandhara, etc., heavy snowfall would diminish the pace of the camp. It could obstruct the march and compel the imperial camp to halt for days. Perhaps the most vivid description on how snowfall could be so wearisome has been provided by Babur in his memoirs. In 1506 Babur had set out for Kabul. However, on the way the snowfall had become so intense that the road was fully covered with thick layers of snow. And since he, especially at the time when he was striving to carve out a territory for himself, had no huge number of men at his command that he could send some as *paishkhana* to clear roads and make the way for the advancing royal camp as we get to see in the times of the grand Mughals, therefore, he himself along with his men had performed the task. This is how he had explained about the process of road-clearing:

> I became a snow trampler with ten or fifteen of my ichkis, Qasim Beg, his sons Tengriberdi and Qambar Ali, and another two or three of their servants. We progressed on foot. One person would advance for eight to ten yards, trampling down the snow. Together these ten, fifteen, or twenty people could pack down enough snow for an unmounted horse to be led through. Sinking down to the stirrups or girth strap, the horse could be pulled forward for ten or fifteen paces before it gave out. It was drawn aside and another unmounted horse could be led forward. In this manner we ten to twenty persons trampled down the snow, and our horses were dragged through. Then all the rest of those who enjoyed the titles of fearless warriors and begs entered the prepared, packed-down road without dismounting and proceeded with their heads hung low. It was no time to compel or insist. Anyone with stamina and fortitude will join in such a labor without

[800] *Shah Jahan Nama*, pp. 474-75.

> waiting for an invitation. By compressing the snow and creating a road, we made it in three or four days from that horrible place…[801]

However, even after coming out from the place, Babur's ordeal was not over yet. Because as he moved further and reached a cave called Khawal Quti below the Zirrin Pass, there occurred an intense snowstorm about which he recorded, 'It was so terrible we all thought we were going to die…As we arrived the storm was unbelievably fierce…The snow was so deep that the horses had difficulty coming across a road that had been trampled and packed down.' Here also on finding a cave to rest in and be sheltered from the violent snowstorm, Babur himself had cleared away excess snow at the mouth of the cave. It was so thick that no matter how much he tried to remove it, the snow was still there. He wrote, 'I dug down chest deep, and still I did not reach the ground'. However, after clearing away the snow at the cave entrance, he had not entered inside thinking that the cave was too small for everyone to fit in. He instead of going inside the haven, he let some of his men to go inside and spend the night safely and comfortably there. While he made a dug-out hole and sat there, braving the brutal wind and snow. He had noted down in his memoirs about his condition, 'By the time of the night prayer the snowstorm was still raging so much that I sat all huddled up. Four spans of snow were on my back and covering my head and ears. My ears got frostbite.' Babur had endured such extreme weather all for his comrades and for the comradeship. He explained, 'I figured that to leave my people out in the snow and the storm, with me comfortable in a warm place, or to abandon all the people to hardship and misery, with me here asleep without a care, was neither manly or comradely.' [802]

Fairly by the time of Akbar's reign when the spirit of comradeship was replaced by the notion of service and loyalty, it became unimaginable for a Mughal Emperor and his royal scions to either clear roads themselves and make the way to move further or to make arrangements required for halting at a safe place and then inviting their men to rest there while subjecting themselves to utter harsh weather. The rules and protocols now were markedly established. When passing through a narrow path and difficult defiles, the

[801] *Baburnama*, tr. Thackston, p. 234.
[802] Ibid., p.234.

royal suite would be the first one to cross over. After the exit of the royal suite, the remaining entourage in successions would follow. But sometimes owing to extremely terrible weather, the remaining camps could not follow the royal suite and had to wait and face the harsh weather. The nobles, no more comrades but at the service of the Mughal Emperor, knew their tasks clearly well and were prompt in receiving and performing instructions to make the imperial camp commence, progress and conclude smoothly even in the times of extreme situations. Despite the fact not always it was a smooth camping in the face of extremely rough weather. When Akbar, to fetch Prince Salim back to the capital, was preparing to go to Allahabad in 1603 on receiving news of his son's excessive intake of opium and wine and acts of barbarity, there occurred a heavy rainfall. And because of such a bad weather condition, tents could not be pitched. However, soon the Emperor had to return to his palace on the arrival of the reports of the illness of his mother which had further worsened and was a matter of grave concern.

When Prince Aurangzeb was sent on a military expedition to Balkh along with Raja Jai Singh and Sayeed Khan in 1647 by Shah Jahan, they had to face severe weather condition on account of heavy snow because of which the expedition had to be called off. Shah Jahan's *farman* to Raja Jai Singh dated 13 December 1647 tells that due to the harsh weather and the consequent loss of Royal forces, the Emperor commanded the Raja to come back.[803] While in another instance when Shah Jahan had sent Dara Shikoh in order to recapture Kandahar, he ordered Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Quleech Khan in his *farman* dated 19 November 1652 to reach Peshawar before the arrival of the winter because the snow and icy condition in the winter would close the roads and affect their movement. Prince Dara Shikoh halted at Jalalabad.[804] Before this, on 13 October 1652, the Emperor had issued a farman with the same instructions. On the same day Mirza Raja Jai Singh was instructed by Prince Dara Shikoh in his *nishan* to the Rajput noble, dated 13 October 1652 (नवीन नं. 203/ पूर्व नं. 41) echoing the instructions mentioned in the imperial *farman*:

[803] *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans addressed by the Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, p. 8.
[804] Ibid. p. 9.

हम सकुशल माह ज़ीकादह को पिशावर पहुंच गए । और इसी तारीख़ को शाही फ़रमान पारित हुआ की आप पिशावर पहुंचें । अतः यह आदेश पारित किया जाता है की यदि अब तक पहाड़ों में बर्फ़ पड़ी हुई हो और मार्ग बंद हों तो सम्पूर्ण सेना सहित, उस सैनिक टुकड़ी के अतिरिक्त, जो काबुल शहर के लिए नियुक्त है, इस तरफ़ रवाना होकर पिशावर में नए आदेश के पारित होने तक ठहरे रहें और यदि वर्तमान में मार्ग अवरुद्ध न हो तो आदेश होता है की आप कुलीजख़ां को पांच छः हज़ार मुग़ल सवारों सहित जागीरों के समस्त मनसबदारों सहित चन्द दिनों के लिए, जब तक पहाड़ों में बरफ गिरे, काबुल में छोड़ दें कि वह मार्ग अवरुद्ध हो जाने के पश्चात आ जाएगा । और आप शेष सेना सहित अहदियों व बर्क़अन्दाज़ों के साथ जो काबुल के लिए नियुक्त न हों, पिशावर के लिए प्रस्थान कर जावें ।[805]

In another *nishan* to the Raja dated 6 November 1652 (नवीन नं. 204/ पूर्व नं. 33), the Prince issued the following instructions:

उस फ़रमान में जो इन दिनों बादशाह सलामत की तरफ से पारित हुआ है - आदेश दिया गया है कि मिरज़ा राजा व कुलीचख़ां अवं नज़र बहादुर के पुत्र यहाँ आ जाएं और समस्त बादशाही मुलाज़िम पिशावर में रहें । अतः आप उस आदेश के अनुसार कार्यवाई करके अपने भाइयों व सैनिकों सहित, कुलीचखां, ख़न्जरख़ां अवं नज़र बहादुर के पुत्रों के साथ इस तरफ तुरंत प्रस्थान कर जाएं । और किसी अन्य व्यक्ति को साथ न लावें और सबसे कह दें की यह अभियान इस वर्ष क़रार (तै) पाया है, आने-जाने में सैनिकों के घोड़े दुर्बल व ख़राब हो जाएंगे ।अतः आवश्यक है बादशाह सलामत के आदेशानुसार क्रियान्विति करें ।[806]

[805] *फ़ारसी फरमानों के प्रकाश में मुग़लकालीन भारत अवं राजपूत शासक*, भाग -3, p. 80.
[806] Ibid. p. 84.

When Norris halted at Panhala on his way to meet Aurangzeb, the weather had turned out to be tormenting with a violent storm, rain and hail and because the tents were not well fixed, therefore, the pegs came out and many tents were blown down. Norris in his words described the violent weather, 'Jst before ye storme came wee saw it very black & darke towards ye east from whence it came & prodigious cloud of Dust drove before it. The Haile stone yt fell in ye storme were as big as ordinary plums & shapd like younge mushroomes of a more spungy substance & lighter much in proportion then ye Hailstones in England however were very roublesome---storme cominge wth yt Impetuosity did us some damage, but nothinge soe much as I expected…When ye storme was over we sett up our Tents & did as sailors doe after a storme dry & Refitt as fast wee could & prepard against ye next'.[807]

Procurement of Provisions

Every minute and big detail pertaining to the needs of the Emperor was given utmost importance. For example, the Mughal Emperor would drink water brought from the Ganges. When stationed at Agra and in Fathpur, the Ganges water was collected from the district of Sorun and when the Emperor was located in the Punjab, it came from Haridwar. The water was stored in sealed jars, dispatched through some reliable people on the banks of the river. The water from this source was made available to him even when he was camping and especially when he was travelling, he was extremely cautious and had experienced water-tasters to check the water before he consumed it. The Mughals had an elaborate arrangements to acquire chilled water and ice in summers while camping as well.[808]

After leaving Andizhan and Samarqand and be in constant move from one place to another until finally he reached Hindustan, Babur in such times received invitations of wine parties and feasts from the local personages. Jahangir would either throw a wine party or he would enjoy some cups of wine at several halts taken by the imperial camp. Proceeding from Mandu to Gujarat, the camp had pitched on the bank of the tank of Nalchha. There 'Having enjoyed the usual cups on the edge of the stream and the shade

[807] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, pp. 290-1.
[808] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 57-8.

of the hill,' Jahangir had written, 'I came back to the camp at night.'[809] Forwarding from Ujjain, he had recorded, 'On Monday, the 4th, Tuesday, the 5th, Wednesday, the 6th, I marched continuously, and halting on Thursday, the 7th, I arranged a feast of pleasure on the bank of a tank.[810] Further, 'As the camp had undergone great hardship in crossing the Ghati [Ghati Chanda], I ordered a halt for the refreshment of the people on Tuesday, he 19th. I marched on Wednesday, the 20th, and on Thursday, the 21st, halted again and held a feast of cups on the bank of a river that is known as the Sind.'[811]

During encampment, the local rajas, jagirdars and also grandees stationed at other provinces would send fruits and other eatable items. While traversing to Kabul for hunting, Jahangir had halted at Gharib-Khana after passing through the Khaibar Kotal (Khyber Pass). The jagirdar of Jalalabad, Abu-l-qasim had brought apricots for His Majesty, rated as good as Kashmiri apricots in beauty by Jahangir. Then when he had arrived at Daka, he was gifted *gilas* (cherries), brought from Kabul. Cherries from Kabul were named Shah-alu by Akbar. Jahangir had relished the fruit a lot.[812]

Jahangir in 1617, encamping at the village of Balbali in the province of Malwa from Raja Janba, the zamindar of the region had received melons in a huge quantity which were brought from Kariz near Heart, Badakhshan and Kabul, grapes from Samarqand and Badakhshan, apples from Samarqand, Kashmir, Kabul and from Jalalabad, a dependency of Kabul and pineapples from the European ports. Jahangir had the plants of pineapples grown in Agra.[813] Still located in the province of Malwa, Jahangir was given an offering of fourteen pomegranates from the port of Mukha (Mocha) by Khwaja Nizam. The pomegranates were sent to Surat from the port in 14 days and it took another 8 days for them to reach at Mandu. Comparing the fruit with the those found at Thatta, Jahangir had remarked that though the ones from Mocha were not seedless as Thatta ones, yet they were more delicate and fresh than the pomegranates from Thatta.[814]

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[809] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 403.
[810] Ibid, vol. II, p. 53.
[811] Ibid, vol. II, p. 57.
[812] Ibid, vol. I, p. 102.
[813] Akbar was especially fond of melons, pomegranates and grapes. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 350.
[814] Ibid., vol. I, p. 391.

Yet on another occasion when Jahangir was on his way to Mandu again from Ahamadabad, Prince Khurram had gifted pomegranates and quinces which the prince had received from Farah. Noticing the uniqueness of the fruits in terms of their huge size, Jahangir had expressed, 'I had never seen such large ones, and I ordered them to be weighed. The quince weighed 29 tolas 9 mashas and the pomegranates 401/2 tolas.[815]

Ensuring adequate provisions for camping was especially a big concern in times of battles and sieges. When Khan Dauran and the Khan Khanan, the Mughal commanders were sent by Shah Jahan for the siege of Parenda, the Royalist Commanders halted at such a place where no grass and firewood was available 'within a circuit of 12 *kos* round the camp, so that the foragers in going and coming had to traverse more than 20 *kos*'.[816]

Entourage

The Mughal camp had a huge entourage which would swell up with the progress of the camp. It is difficult to say an accurate size of the camp. The court chroniclers' accounts reflect the eulogizing temperament. The author of *Akbari Darbar* informs that when Akbar would go out for hunting or for a short expedition, his retinue large and yet it was no less than a spectacle. 'पर वह सारे भारत का सम्राट और ४४ लाख सैनिकों का सेनापति था, इसलिए उसकी संछिप्त सेना और सामग्री भी दर्शनीय ही होती थी ।'[817] The passage of Kami Shirazi gives the impression that the number of men was so huge that it appeared to be incalculable:

> At every stage he pitched the royal tent; and the number of his army men exceeded even the number of the moving planets.
>
> When they proceeded towards Kabul the force of the moon became dark on account of the dust raised on the road.[818]

[815] Ibid, vol. I, p. 439.
[816] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 135.
[817] अकबरी दरबार, भाग-१, पृ॰ २३० ।
[818] *Waqa-i-uz-Zaman*, p. 118.

In the year 1665 when Aurangzeb marched to Kashmir, Bernier estimated that there were at least one hundred thousand horsemen. The animals like horses, mules, and elephants were more than one hundred and fifty thousand; camels were about fifty thousand.[819]

Marching with such an enormous entourage meant slow pace. Bernier who had also accompanied the royal camp of Aurangzeb in 1665, traversing from one metropolis to another, i.e. from Delhi to Lahore, informed that the distance between the two 'is little more than one hundred and twenty leagues or about fifteen days' journey'. Still it took the imperial camp to reach Lahore the duration of almost two months.[820] The sluggish pace of the magnificent camp of the Mughals was not solely because of the large number of men constituted the camp but also because the Emperor would not plainly traverse from one place to another; he would undertake several halts in between the journey. He would perform all administrative duties as performed at any of his metropolis and thus, he would be meticulous not to neglect his regal duties at any cost. Also, he would indulge himself in hunting wild game on coming across any hunting ground.

Sometimes the number of men to march along the imperial camp was to be fixed to a minimum when reaching the destination was demanding and dangerous from the perspective of its difficult terrain and the complexity involved in procuring provisions. Accordingly, those permitted to march with the royal suite were a selected few and were important and experienced officers of the Empire. Jahangir would just allow the royal Princes, some personal attendants and a very limited number of officials, game-keepers and required domestics while visiting the rose-garden of Kashmir. The rest would follow in the rear at intervals so that all could pass through the slender paths.[821]

Normally a hunting expedition to a nearby hunting ground would also require not too many men. Hunting expeditions were also enjoyed frequently when the Emperor was on a long journey. And then also, the Emperor would not be accompanied by all the assembled men. With a small group of his selected men, he would hunt and it was a rare privilege for them. Once Akbar had gone to Nandana on a deer-hunt with a very few

[819] Bernier, p. 380.
[820] Ibid., p. 358.
[821] *Shah Jahan Nama*, pp. 123-24.

selected men, leaving others in the camp. Some nobles like Jahan Khan, Shaikh Jamal, Khwaja Ismail, Madhav Singh, Surat Singh, Kunwar shri Dalpatji, Gopaldas Rao Durga, Bhana Saktawat, Sakta Ranawat, Akhairaj and Salhadi, however, decided among themselves to instead play Kabaddi on a river bank. When the news of the arrival of the Emperor had reached them, they remained in their meager clothes, thinking that the Emperor too would join them. 'ताहरां इयां ठाकुरां मतो कियो पोत कीयै ही ज रहो । पातिसाहजी पधारि अर रमै ।'[822] But when they received another news that the Emperor had gone to the tent of Shaikh Jamal, the nobles decided to dress themselves up and go to the Emperor. There were other nobles like Danaji and Prithidip who were resting in their tents. The Emperor, who by then, mounted on his horse and passed by the place where Dalpat and Madhav Singh were placed. Each of the two men presented the Emperor with a horse.[823] When Danaji and Prithidip arrived to see the Emperor, they were questioned about their late arrival and the displeased Emperor ordered them to be whipped. Prithidip while being beaten up with a whip, in his shame, took out a dagger and assaulted himself. This further infuriated Akbar who ordered for the execution of the noble by trampling him under elephant's feet. When the beast was called, he didn't move. The incensed Emperor went to his palace.

> ताहरां कोरड़ा रो हुकम कियो । जिसड़ै सै गोपालियै कोरड़ो हेक वाह्यो अर बीजो ऊभा रहियो तिसड़ै सै रणाधीरोत कटारो काढि अर यदि वाह्यो । हेको बीजो तीजो उपाड़ियो तिसड़ै पातिसाहजी खिजिया जु मारो मारो हरामज़ादै नूं । अर हाथी मंगायो । सु हाथी करोडिए पेसकस कियो हुंतो सु हाथी मंगायो । सु हाथी तो ढूकै नहीं । ताहरां पातिसाहजी खिजि अर महल मांहि सिधाया ।[824]

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[822] दळपत सारस्वत (संपादक), *दळपत विलास,* सादूल राजस्थानी रिसर्च इन्स्टीट्यूट, बीकानेर, १९६० ई., पृ॰ ९५ ।

[823] It was the Mughal tradition that whenever the Emperor passed by the tent of any noble, he had to be personally there to receive him and also offer him some gift.

[824] *दळपत विलास*, पृ॰ १०० ।

On the demise of the Rajput noble, Prithidip who stabbed himself, Dalpat recorded in his work that the infuriated Akbar was heard speaking loudly like mad, saying that may Hindus eat beef and Muslims pork and that that would be a divine magic:

> आगै पातिसाह और रूप हुया बके छै । गाइ है सु हिंदू र रूप हुया बके छै । और मुसळमान सूअर खावो । नाजे हुडियार नांजे ऐन खावो तो हुडियार कड़ाहि विचि वाहो अर रांधो, जे हुडियार हुंता सूअर होइ तो हिंदू मुसळमांन रळ खावो । जे सूअर होइ तो मुसळमांन खावो जे गाइ होइ तो हिंदू खावो । क्युं ऊं देवीमि(devimishra) होइगा ।[825]

The reason why Akbar was incensed with rage was because it was the sole right of the Emperor to take anybody's life in his domain.[826] He was the only one who could give a capital punishment. No one else had the right to take anybody's life or also to take one's own. Prithidip's action of stabbing himself twice (in the first attempt he was saved while in the second he had succumbed to the injury he caused to himself) in the course of being punished on the order of the Emperor was his attempts to defy the Emperor and in the end, he proved to be successful. Therefore, the Emperor was maddened with his act of defiance done so explicitly in the presence of other important nobles. Akbar was said to have reacted to the incident by removing his turban from his head and calling for a barber. He instructed him to shave off his hair. But the barber ran away in fright. Then Akbar took out his dagger and started to cut his hair. On seeing this, Shah Fatlah, Jain Khan and Shaikh Farid snatched away the dagger from Akbar's hand. All the nobles who were present there took off their turban. Akbar had his head shaved.

> आप पाघड़ी उतारी, नाई बुलाइ अर भुआळ उतारो । इसड़ै कहियै ऊपरि ताहरां नाई सहि नसाड़िया । ताहरां साह फतलह पातिसाहजी रा हाथ झलिया । जईनखांन, अर सेख फरीद पातिसाहजी रा हाथां कटोरो झलियो । ताहरां साह फतलह कहियो जे पातिसाहजी भुआळ उतरावणा हीज तो भुआळ उतराडीजै । सगळां उमरावां नूं कहियो पाघड़ी उतराड़ो । ताहरां

[825] Ibid., पृ॰१०३ ।.
[826] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. III, p. 443.

पाघड़ो सगळे उतारी । उतारि उतारि हिंदू मुसळमांण पाघड़ी काख माहे घाती । मानसिंघ पणि उतारि अर काख माहे घाती । भुआळ पातिसाहजी उतराड़िया ।[827]

When going out on a hunting expedition, there were certain rules and protocols to be observed. One day Shah Jahan with his hunting party went for hunt and they spotted a beautiful hawk. Eager to capture it, the royal hunting party pursued the bird. Since capturing a hawk alive was not as an easy sport, therefore, the Emperor left the hunting ground and returned to Lahore, entrusting the task on his men. However, the bird was captured not by the imperial hunting party, but by that of Guru Hargobind's hunting party led by Bhai Bidhi Chand. When the former party, headed by Faujdar Ghulam Rasul Khan demanded the latter's leader to submit the captured bird to them, there erupted a fight in which Faujdar Ghulam Rasul Khan was wounded while two of his men lost their lives.[828] Hunting simultaneously on the same hunting ground as selected by the royal hunting squad was a serious offence in the eyes of the Mughals. The audacity of the Sikhs which was seen as an overt instance of undermining the imperial power and prestige enraged the Mughal Emperor. Furthermore, Guru Hargobind had proclaimed himself as the Sacha Padshah (as we have already highlighted it earlier), thus, contesting the Mughal authority. Shah Jahan sent a military expedition against the Sikhs under the leadership of Mukhlis Khan. In the fight, he was killed by Guru Hargobind and the Sikhs won the battle (1634).[829]

There was a difference between the camp undertaken for the hunting purpose and the camp organized for purposes like pleasure trips, moving from one metropolis to another, etc. The camps for the latter purposes were aimed at striking a sense of awe among its onlookers. Imperial camps on such occasions were a grand spectacle and people from far and near would come to see the magnificent camp. Many would come and join the camp too, thus, enlarging its size. However, the scenario in the case of hunting expeditions was totally dissimilar. First off, the camp the Emperor had for his hunting expeditions consisted only of skilled men. Common people were strictly prohibited to pass by the

[827] *दळपत विलास*, पृ॰ १०३-४ ।
[828] *Guru Tegh Bahadur (Prophet and Martyr)*, pp. 46-7.
[829] Ibid. pp. 47-8.

hunting ground on which the Emperor was engaged in hunting. Hunting was an exclusive royal affair. By excluding maximum and including minimum number of men, the exclusivity was maintained. On the other hand, by permitting a vast number of men to join the imperial camp on other occasions implied the intention to make the imperial presence visible and formidable.

The imperial camp was also joined by the Europeans whether the Emperor was moving on for some pleasure trip or a military campaign, etc. Sometimes they were even asked for assistance in some important military affairs. In November 1597 Akbar had marched to the Deccan to annex Ahmadnagar and Khandesh. He took two Jesuit Fathers with him, Father Xavier and Brother Goes. Akbar had occupied Burhanpur but to capture Asirgarh, he was facing a tough resistance. He was running short of artillery. He called the two Jesuits asking for their assistance in the matter by requesting guns and munitions from the Portuguese at Chaul. They declined to do so saying that it would be against their Christian faith. Du Jarric opined that their refusal was on the account that Khandesh was in alliance with the Portuguese. Their denial invited Akbar's anger and thus, the two were forbidden to come into the imperial presence.[830]

Perils

The camp life, no matter how magnificent it appeared with all its royal paraphernalia, was certainly not devoid of its share of risks and vulnerability. The first two Mughal Emperors especially had to face a lot of sudden attacks from their opposing party. In one of his attempts to reclaim Andizhan in the Fergana valley from Sultan-Ahmad Tambal[831], Babur planned to attack and take the citadel of the territory in his possession. In those days, the youngest brother of Tambul, Sultan-Muhammad Kalpuk, was in the citadel. He

[830] Maclagan, pp. 57-8.

[831] Sultan-Ahmad Tambul earlier was one of the honoured men of Babur. When Babur had captured Samarqand, he had shown greatest favours to Tambul. The latter had been an ichki 'but was promoted to the circle of great lords'. But as the begs, ichkis and warriors of Babur had to leave their families behind at Andizhan, soon around seven or eight hundred of them had deserted him and went back to Andizhan. Tambul too deserted and went back to Andizhan. He collected the other deserters and openly rebelled in favour of Jahangir Mirza. Babur, left with no more than three hundred men, was affected so badly by the situation that he could not help but recording that he 'wept involuntarily'. Besides, some of his remaining begs would too threaten him to desert him. One Qambar-Ali at Babur's court, in his anger, had made threats of leaving him on a couple of occasions. *Baburnama*, pp. 62-7, 87.

had come out with his men to go to Ayesh Hill, located outside the city. It was then Babur had assaulted the army successfully but on the advice of his aged and experienced begs, drew back to the border of the suburbs and camped beside a village called Rabat-i-Zaurak for the night which was a flat open ground. Such a location for camping, chosen by Babur was surely at odds from the viewpoint of the safety of his men and him as he had received news of Tambal's retreat to Andizhan. A fortified place alongside a canal like the Khakan would have been much safer choice which he had ignored. Babur's own words in his memoirs expain how dangerous the location chosen for camping was, 'No scouts, no rear guard—we lay down open to attack'. And by the break of the dawn, indeed, they were attacked by Tambal and Babur had received severe wounds from the latter. 'Tambal had on all his armor except for the horse mail. I had none save my quiver and sword. I took aim at his mailed head with the arrow I had in my hand and shot. Just then an arrow struck me in the thigh, piercing straight through. I had an underhelmet cap on my head. Tambal landed such a blow on my head that ny head went numb. Although not a thread of the cap was cut, my head was badly wounded. I had not unsheathed my sword: it was still in the scabbard. There was no time to draw my sword. There I remained, alone in the midst of the numerous enemy, but it was no place to stand still. I had retreated…'[832] Later Babur's wounds were tended by an expert surgeon, Atika Bakhshi.

On one hand, camping aided the Emperor to check centrifugal tendencies, it was equally an important prospect for dissenters. Prince Salim had revolted against Akbar when the latter was camping in the Deccan. Abul Fazl was assassinated on the order of Prince Salim while he was coming from the Deccan to Agra as per the imperial direction. This was the time when Salim had rebelled against his father and he deemed Fazl as someone who was always poisoning his father's ears against him. As soon as he was informed of Fazl leaving the Deccan for Agra, he felt alarmed and assigned Raja Bir Singh Deo Bundela to eliminate Fazl. Accordingly, when Fazl's camp had reached Sarai Barar,

[832] Ibid., pp. 123-27.

located at a distance of ten karoh from Gwalior, he was ambushed and murdered.[833] Murad Bakhsh was taken into Aurangzeb's custody while he was camping to Akbarabad.

Jahangir was trapped by Mahabat Khan while he went to hunt near Lahore. In 1626 when the Emperor had set out of Lahore for Kabul, and his army had crossed a narrow bridge over the River Behat[834] and marched on, he decided not to cross the river and instead halt at the side of the river, guarded by a few men who included some of his trusted nobles and a few game-keepers. Sensing this as the right opportunity to strike, Mahabat Khan was informed of the halt by some disloyal men. The Khan hurried to the location with his Rajput army. On reaching the imperial camp, he immediately went to meet the Emperor without observing any protocols. However, the Chamberlain tried to restrict his entry as it was against the court protocol. No noble could meet the Emperor without the imperial summon. The hajib spoke, "Your going in this fashion is against the court etiquette as you have not been summoned by the Emperor." Hearing so, Mahabat Khan stabbed the man to death and went in to meet the Emperor.

It is interesting to note that Mahabat Khan had shown no hesitation in killing the hajib whereas as soon as he entered the Emperor's chamber, his whole demeanour was transformed, 'He stood before the throne of the King, with a tongue eloquent in apologies and with a face fixed on the ground.' And unlike the powerful nobles of the Delhi Sultanate period, the Mughal elites even when there was a time when they became powerful enough to dethrone the Emperor, none of them had ever dared to sit on the throne themselves. Mahabat Khan very well aware of his precarious situation, thus, addressing to Jahangir, spoke:

> If you have seen me committing any offence, tell me that offence of mine.
>
> Here is my head before you and here slay it without sharp sword; I am willing to sacrifice my life at your feet.
>
> I am your old slave who has faithfully served you in the past.

[833]Khwaja Kamgar Husaini, *Ma'asir-i-Jahangiri, A Contemporary Account of Jahangir*, ed. Azra Alavi, Asia Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, pp. 29-30.
[834] In the north of Kashmir, the river Jhelum is known as Behat in Persian.

> What has caused you severe (the bounds) of love for me and turn your face from me.

He further advised the Emperor to look after the welfare of the empire, thus, attempting to validate his action by suggesting that because of the negligence of his royal duties, he was compelled to take such a step.[835]

Yet we have another instance which informs us that after the death of Akbar, Raja Man Singh and Khan Azam Mirza Aziz Koka made Prince Khusrau to sit on the Mughal throne. However, when Khusrau had gone out camping with a purpose to visit the tomb of Akbar, Shaikh Farid Bakshi announced Jahangir as the Emperor. The proclamation was well-received by all as Jahangir to them was the rightful heir to the imperial throne. 'हकदार होने के सबब सब लोगों ने तावेदारी कुबूळ की.'[836]

When Aurangzeb decided to retreat towards Aurangabad and abort his intention to fight against the prince of Mysore after receiving reports that some Pathan chiefs, ruling between the province of Kabul and the Indus river, had rebelled and killed many men of Prince Shah Alam, then on his way back to Aurangabad the imperial camp was attacked by the Marathas who 'reached the rear of the advance tent, in which the king took a rest, and killed one thousand Mughals, burnt the tent, and carried off the officer, whom they blinded, to prison in a fortress. For this ransom they demanded five *lakhs* of rupees. The Mahrattahs had many openings for attacking the king himself, but declined to avail themselves of them, owing to the profit they find in his continuance to live'.[837]

Aurangzeb incensed with the attempts of Shivaji to frustrate him and his marches, decided 'to equip for war some fifteen thousand camels, and mount as many men on them, fitted out with all the arms and necessary *materiel* for making a good defence while on the march. He has no doubt that this device will prove most efficacious for forestalling and stopping the endless ravages of this rajah. The reason is that these animals can easily, without being much distressed, cover forty or fifty leagues every day. Such a journey

[835] *Fathanama-i-Nur Jahan*, pp. 124-8.
[836] Mahamahopadhyay Kaviraj Shyamaldas, *Vir Vinod: Mewar ka Itihas*, vol. II, Motilal Banarsidas, 1986, New Delhi, p. 291.
[837] Storia, vol. IV, p. 230.

cannot be accomplished by the smartest cavalry. If this corps can be formed, it will infallibly answer his purpose. But, while it is easy to procure camels, it is almost impossible to find enough men able to stand the tossing motion of these beasts. The men trained to ride them in this fashion are extremely few.'[838]

Careri informs us that Shah Alam, one of the sons of Aurangzeb, had nurtured the desire to sit on the Mughal throne while his father was still alive. In order to accomplish it, he 'once caus'd a great Trench to be dug near *Aurenge Zeb*'s Tent, that he might fall into it, as he pass'd by ; but he being told of it by an Eunuch, escap'd death ; and put the wicked Scialam into a darl Prison, where he continu'd Six Years, tho' 60 Years of Age, till a few Days before I came into the Camp.'[839]

Extreme weariness caused by especially long camping sometimes caused illness. The difficult camp life was especially cruel to the infants, olds and the sick ones. On the 8th January, 1405, Timur went camping from his capital city, Samarcand to invade China braving the harsh weather. But his frail constitution could not withstand the heavy snowfall for long. '… crossing the Jaxartes upon the ice, he encamped at a place called Otrar. In February he was attacked by fever and ague, and he died on the 17th of that month, in the year 1405, aged sixty-nine, leaving thirty-six male descendants.'[840] Before Babur was finally settled in Hindustan, he had to be on move constantly owing to the troubled political scenario. In the camp life, many offspring were born but a few of them survived. He wrote, 'After Humayun[841] several infants were born to Humayun's mother, but none survived.'[842] In December 1647 Dara Shikoh while camping to reach Delhi had lost his second son, Sultan Mumtaz Shikoh who was four year old. He died of fever.[843] Even those of strong constitution and skilled had to keep a vigilance on several matters relating to camps. Khan Dauran *Bahadur Nusrat Jang* on the enroute to the Deccan from Lahore was attacked in his tent by the son of a Kashmiri Brahmin whom he had

[838] Ibid., vol. III, p. 395.
[839] Thevenot & Careri, p. 238.
[840] Clavijo, pp. xlix, l.
[841] Babur's first son, Humayun was born at Kabul on 6 March, 1508. *Baburnama*, p. 260.
[842] Ibid., p. 267.
[843] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 403.

converted to Islam and made him one of his personal attendants. The murderer was caught and killed on the spot. But Khan Dauran too died the following day.[844]

Siddhi Chandra in his work, *Bhanuchandra Charita* had recorded that when Akbar had visited Kashmir in 1597, while watching a combat between two antelopes, he was terribly injured by the beast's horn which had pierced his thigh.[845]

When camping especially for pleasure visits, witnessing dead bodies lying away on road would have really presented an unpleasant sight. Hence, while the Emperor was on march, ahead of the tent of the Emperor, there used to be a camel sent, carrying many pieces of white cloth to place them over a dead animal or a dead person lying on the path. To secure the cloth's placement so that it won't be blown away by the wind, a bunch of stones were arranged on the corners of the cloth.[846]

A huge fire broke out at the imperial palace at Lahore in 1597. Akbar set out for Kashmir on 15 May and stayed there till 13 November. He was also accompanied by two Jesuits who had come to his court, Father Xavier and Brother Goes. As soon as the two reached the valley, they fell severely sick for two months. Thereafter, the Emperor too had contracted an illness.[847] Once Norris while on his way to visit the imperial court of Aurangzeb fell ill so badly with ' "frequent vomiting great faintnesse & violent inward heates" that he seemed likely to go to a court higher even than that of the Mughal'.[848]

The situation in the imperial camp in the times of Aurangzeb presented not a very pleasing picture as observed by Europeans visiting it. In order to visit the court of Aurangzeb, Norris had to march and camp for more than one and a half months, experiencing ruthless weather and 'difficulties and hardships in traversing a barren,

[844] Ibid., p. 325.
[845] Pushpa Prasad, 'Akbar and the Jains', ed. Irfan Habib, *Akbar and His India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p. 105.
[846] Manucci, Pepys, pp. 105-6.
[847] Maclagan, pp. 55-6.
[848] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 290.

rugged and uneven forest country, in which he could find no water till he reached "Ghent" '.[849]

Another European traveller, Manucci recorded:

> Yet his (Aurangzeb's) army is a filthy, dirty place, more like a scourge sent by God, judging by the daily mortality of men and animals. The common people are dealt with as mere animals after they are dead. Their bodies are searched to see if they have any money, and after the feet have been tied together with a rope, they are dragged out of the camp and thrown into the first hole to be found. The same is done to the animals, and both serve as aliment, for wolves, dogs, and crows.
>
> A great stench is caused in this way, and no measures are taken to get rid of this filthiness. Many a time, under such circumstances, I have found myself unable to bear the evil smell, and been forced to urge my horse to gallop to get away from it, holding my nose as I did so. Sometimes I was even compelled to vomit, human nature being unable to bear such a grievous thing. The flies are in such numbers that there is no means of eating your food in peace.'[850]

While enroute to the Mughal court Norris had encamped at one of the towns called Miraj and he too made a similar kind of observation as Manucci did. He observed that the imperial camp had recently encamped just outside the town and that there was no "Relicks of order or Regularity & the ditch Thrown up all alonge ye line…" and that there was 'offensive smells from the carcasses of elephants, camels, etc…'[851] And when he had finally reached the imperial camp, many members of his entourage were affected by "fluxes"[852]. Norris claimed that one of the reasons for the infection was 'partly due to the immense crowds and insanitary condition of the Emperor's camp, a state of things which was aggravated by the rains'.[853]

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[849] Ibid., p. 285.
[850] *Storia do Mogor*, vol. IV, pp. 109-10.
[851] *Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p. 287.
[852] An abnormal discharge of blood or other matter from or within the body: as *(1)* **:** diarrhea *(2)* **:** dysentery.
[853] *Norris*, p. 314.

The life at the camp was long and harsh especially for the nobles and soldiers who were often engaged into military expeditions. Sometimes such strenuous life passed a speck of eccentricism into them. Daud Khan, an official of Aurangzeb, while on his march to the fortress of Pelconda (Penukonda) , would take pleasure in setting his dogs to attack on animals, poor men and beggars and one day he set them at some of his captains. But the captains killed the dogs and injured Daud Khan who was trying to save his dogs. 'From this event there was a great outbreak in the army, and declaring Daud Khan to be mad, the principal officers tried to put him in chains.'[854] Later, Daud Khan had to plead with them to forgive him for his bestial act.

Aurangzeb had spent the last 25 years (1682-1707) of his reign in the Deccan.[855] By the time he reached the fading years of his life, the weariness of continuous marching and camping started becoming palpable. 'Being now old and with little strength left, the king (Aurangzeb) was very desirous of returning to the city of Dihli, repenting of not having listened to the advice of his sister, Begam Sahib.'[856] 'This old king (Aurangzeb) still shows his eagerness for war by the gestures he uses on the march. While seated in his palanquin, he unsheathes his sword, makes cuts in the air, first one way, then the other, and, smiling all the while, polishes it with a cloth, then returns it to its scabbard. He does the same with his bow, to show that he can still let fly an arrow.'[857]

Meetings

Since Mughal Emperors spent much of their time in camping, therefore, whether going for a pleasure trip or for a battle or hunt, etc., the camps had also become a place where they would hold meetings. Jauhar described the meeting between Humayun and Kamran in the year 1548 and the manner in which Humayun gave audience to his brother in his tent. In the words of Jauhar:

> When the Prince Kamran approached, orders were given to all the chiefs to go out and meet him ; tents were also pitched for his reception, and the bands of

[854] *Storia*, vol. IV, p. 247.
[855]Salma Ahmed Farooqui, *Comprehensive History of Medieval India: From Twelfth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2011, p. 263.
[856] *Storia*, vol. IV, p. 55.
[857] Ibid., vol. IV, p. 94.

> music stationed at the proper places to give notice of his arrival. On his first entering the camp, he was carried to the tent of Prince Hindal ; but without giving him time to sit down, he was informed he might proceed to the tent of audience, as the King was ready to receive him. As soon as he stepped on the carpet of the royal pavilion, he took a handkerchief from one of the attendants and tied it round his own neck (as an acknowledgement of his crimes) ; his Majesty, on seeing this, said, "oh my dear brother, there is no necessity for this, throw off the handkerchief." The Prince then made three salutations, after which the King embraced him, and caused him to sit down on his right hand. After he had made some excuses the King arose, and said, "what has taken place was a ceremonious meeting, now let us meet as brothers ;" they then reciprocally embraced each other : upon which the trumpets sounded, and the whole assembly were much delighted : a cup of sherbet was then brought, half of which was drank by the king, the other half by the Prince ; they then entered into familiar conversation. After which the Princes Hindal and Askery were seated on the same carpet with them, and the four brothers eat *salt* together ; then they offered up prayers for his Majesty's prosperity. The feast was prolonged for two days, which were passed in every kind of rejoicing.[858]

Even Mughal princes received court grandees and ambassadors at their mobile court during encampment. A Mughal painting at Bharat Kala Bhavan painted by Fateh Chand in 1648 shows Prince Muradbaksh, the youngest son of Shahjahan receiving Khusrau, son of Nazar Muhammad Khan. In an enclosure created with floral kanats (tent panels or screens) under a brocaded canopy Prince Muradbaksh receives the envoy. The possible location of the encampment has been suggested as Sirab (Balkh). One may notice the use of court girdle by all the elites lined up on both sides of the central platform.[859]

When Shivaji agreed to surrender to the might of the Mughal Empire and decided to meet Raja Jai Singh in his camp, he was greeted in the following manner. As soon as he arrived at the camp site of the Mirza, the latter sent Ikhlas Khan and Kanwar Kirat Singh to receive Shivaji. When he was brought to the tent of the Mirza, the Mirza stood up and went to embrace Shivaji and made him to sit on the cushions (masnad). Shivaji, then,

[858] *The Tezkereh al Vakiat or Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun*, p. 92.
[859] Anjan Chakraverty, *Indian Miniature Painting*, Lustre Press, Roli Books, 2003, p. 65.

made an offering of a very expensive ruby, weighing fifty misqal, to the Mirza and seeked forgiveness for the offences he had made against the Emperor. To the Mirza, he also gave the keys of the twelve forts he had surrendered.[860]

Royal Ladies

The Mughal harem was an important element of the royal entourage especially the favourites and the important ones would often accompany the Emperor in his several camping excursions. When a prince was conferred a new province or was promoted to a different one, he would go to the allotted territory along with his harem. And even a heavily pregnant queen would go with the royal camp. Consequently, we come across instances of many royal births as well some deaths during the encampment. On the way to Burhanpur in 1630, Shah Jahan's chief queen, Arjumand Banu Begum had given birth to the thirteenth child who was given the name of Husnara Begam but the child died very soon.[861] The fourteenth one, Princess Goharara Begam was born at Burhanpur in 1631. This time the infant survived but the mother who was now 40 year old had developed a severe complication during the delivery of the child and died. [862] She was for a brief period buried in the garden of Zainabad at Burhanpur until her mausoleum was constructed completely at Akbarabad and her remains were shifted there under the supervision of her second son, Prince Muhammad Shah Shuja. During the reallocation of the bodily remains of the Queen, the prince was instructed by the Emperor 'to distribute at every stage great quantities of victuals and money in charity upon the poor'.[863]

The daughter of Prince Parvez gave birth to a son, Sultan Sulaiman Shikoh in the tent of Prince Dara Shikoh, the heir-apparent on 15 March 1635 when the camp was halting at

[860] *Futuhat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 86.
[861] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 38.
[862] Inayat Khan had described the effect of the death of Shah Jahan's chief queen, Arjumand Banu Begam on His Majesty in the following words:
'For a whole week after this distressing occurrence, His Majesty from excess of grief did not appear in public nor transact any affairs of state. On Thursday, the ninth day after the event, he visited the grave of that pilgrim to the realms of eternity and gladdened her pure spirit through the recitation of opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an. He made it a rule as long as he remained at Burhanpur, always to visit the shrine of the recipient of God's mercies every Friday evening. After this calamity, he refrained from the practice of listening to music, singing, and wearing fine linen. From constant weeping he was forced to use spectacles; and his august beard and mustache, which had only a few white hairs in them before, became in a few days from intense sorrow more than one-third white.' Ibid., p. 70.
[863] Ibid., pp. 73-4.

Sultanpur.[864] When Aurangzeb was on his way to the metropolis of Lahore from Daulatabad, on 29 December 1639 in the suburbs of Mathura, his son Muhammad Sultan was born.[865]

The royal camp even in the times of war was comprised of the royal ladies. And even when travelling in camps with an intention to conquer a land and thus, grappled with many issues regarding the strategies to be adopted, preparations and commands to be made concerning so as to ensure the success of the battle, the Emperor, in the midst of all, was required not to neglect the required proper decorum which was due to the royal ladies. In the midst of such a busy schedule, he was expected to meet the royal ladies and show his concern towards them. After the defeat of Khurasan Khan, the vazir of Sultan Bahadur of Gujarat by Mirza Askari and other men, Humayun decided to go himself to fight with the Sultan to Gujarat. But before his army could be collected, for a month he put up his advance camp in a garden. He was accompanied by royal ladies too and the manner in which their tents were arranged, reflected hierarchy. The tent of Masuma Sultan Begam was placed at the top of the row, followed by Gul-rang Begam's tent, then Gul-barg Begam's and Bega Begam's and so on and so forth.[866]

The tents and litters of royal ladies and that of the ladies of the royal princes, nobles and governors were to be reflective of their social and political standing in the imperial court. A noble's wife's tent and litter were not to be as grand as that of a prince's wife. Pietro Della Valle had witnessed and described a caravan of the governor of Cambaia who was marching to Surat after being removed from his post by the rebelled Mughal prince, Sultan Khurram. He noted that the wife of this governor was seated in a covered and very comfortable litter which was carried on an elephant, followed by three more elephants but they were unladen. Behind them was a string of coaches consisting of women and these coaches were too covered like the litter of the wife of the governor which was fully covered and completely away from the gaze of the onlookers. The coaches, in which men were placed, were uncovered. They were followed by a huge number of cavalry and

[864] Ibid, p. 145.
[865] Ibid, p. 262.
[866] Gulbadan Begam, p. 129.

infantry.[867] It is to be observed that even though the ladies of the harem were out in the public space and yet, their chastity and exclusiveness was intact because it was exclusively for them that the private space was created and maintained even in the public space. However, the covered coaches of the women in the caravan do not indicate that they enjoyed egalitarianism. The sole placement of the governor's wife's litter on a huge beast, elephant, leading the caravan of the governor's harem was a visible mark of distinction. The coaches of other females were to follow the direction as espoused by the one heading the caravan of the governor's harem. Of course, the caravan of the harem was to follow the course as taken up by the Governor, highlighting the network of hierarchy.

In times of wars of succession, they had also acted as a mediator between the royal parties, marching to the camps of royal members, proposing a truce or bring about some sort of negotiation between the two sides. After the battle of Samugarh, Aurangzeb with Murad Baksh marched to Akbarabad, the capital city and had encamped in Bagh-i-Dhira which was about a karoh from the capital, with a purpose to capture the fort. Jahanara with the royal message and with the intention to persuade her brother to leave the path of sedition, riding on an elephant marched to Bagh-i-Dhira. Hearing the news of her arrival, the two brothers came out of the encampment to receive Jahanara suitably and with all due respect and escorted her to their encampment. Even in such times, protocols with respect to the reception of royal ladies were observed meticulously.[868]

Paintings commissioned by the Mughal Emperors are another important source to unravel the world of the Mughal camp. An illustration from the *Baburnama*, painted in 1598 A.D. shows an encampment setting in which Babur is depicted mounted on his horse, followed by his mounted men and surrounded by tents. A lot of activities seemed to be taking place. In one tent a shopkeeper is shown selling goods to a man while some men are seen

[867] *Pietro Della Valle in India, 1623 to 1624*, vol. I, tr. G. Havers, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 1991, p. 62.
[868] *Futuhat-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 35-6.

tending to horses, etc. It looks as though Babur had just arrived from his excursion or maybe going out for the one.[869]

In *The meeting of Prince Murad and Nazar Muhammad, Ruler of Balkh and Bukhara,*[870] attributed to Fateh Chand in 1645 A.D. (now at the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Banaras), a meeting between the Prince and the ruler of Balkh and Bukhara after the Mughals had defeated the Uzbegs in 1645 is illustrated. The picture gives us a glimpse of the camp of the Prince. The background contains a clear picture of the Mughal encampment. The tent of the Prince is clearly marked by the royal standard placed over it. Soldiers and beasts like elephants and camels are seen moving about the camp. In the foreground tent, the said meeting is taking place under a canopy. Nazar Muhammad is embracing Murad. The setting somewhat reminds of the durbar settings from Shah Jahan's times. The nobles are shown handsomely standing in two rows in an impeccable order, facing each other. The carpet, the canopy, the brocaded pillows, the fence, all had floral motifs, hinting at the paradisiacal connotation.

Briefly the opulence of a camp was an indicator of whose camp was it. By observing the size, colour of the tent, equipage, etc., one could recognize a royal camp, a prince's camp, a nobleman's camp or that of a merchant's, etc. Therefore, it was not appropriate that the Emperor would have a camp arranged for himself suitable for a prince or a noble. Just as the palaces he built, was indicative of his station, his camp was as well reflective of his grand personage. The framing and upholding the public appearance of the Emperor was very crucial for the success and longevity of his reign. His exit and his entry to his multiple metropolises were to be properly staged with full royal glory.

Even in the absence of the Emperor, the ceremonial objects representing him were revered, representing the omnipresence of the Emperor and his court. When Abul Fazl's brother, Shaikh Faizi was appointed as the ambassador to the ruler of Bijapur, Ibrahim Adil Shah, he was carrying a letter addressed to the Bijapur ruler as well as some other ceremonial objects. His tent had two chambers and it was in the second or in the

[869] *Mughal Miniatures, Texts and Notes by Rai Krishnadasa*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1955, Plate 2.
[870] Ibid., Plate 6.

innermost one, there was placed the royal throne with all its royal paraphernalia such as the gold-embroidered cushion, the royal sword, the dresses of honour and an imperial letter were kept on the throne, over which the velvet canopy, embellished with gold was fixed. Around the throne were men standing with folded hands. When he reached Burhanpur, the local visitors like Raja Ali Khan with his men and the *vakil* and magistrate of the Deccan approached the innermost chamber with a lot of reverence and in the manner akin to the one observed at the imperial court. In his letter to His Majesty, Faizi had written:

When they entered the second chamber, and saw the royal throne at some distance from them, they saluted it, and advanced with bare feet. When they arrived at a certain distance, they were directed to stand and make three salutations, which they did most respectfully, and continued standing in the place. I then took the royal letter in both hands, and calling him a little nearer, said, "His Majesty, the viceregent of God, has sent your highness to royal orders, with the greatest condescension and kindness, —this is one." On this, he took the letter and put it on his head respectfully, and saluted it threetimes. I then said, "His Majesty has bestowed on your highness a dress of honour." Upon this he bowed, kissed it, and bowed again. In the same way he did homage for the sword, and bowed every time Your Majesty's name was mentioned.' Right after the conclusion of the audience, 'He then went and stood respectfully in his place at the edge of the carpet opposite the throne. The royal horses were there. He kissed the reins, placed them on his shoulder and saluted them. He then took his departure. My attendant counted and found that he made altogether 25 salams. He was exceedingly happy and contended. When he first came in he said, "If you command me, I am ready to make 1000 salams in honour of His Majesty I am ready to sacrifice my life for him."[871]

During the years when Shah Jahan was incarcerated in the Agra fort and had wished to see Jahanabad, (the city commissioned by him during his tenure), Aurangzeb, the reigning monarch, though allowed him to see the metropolis but he was clearly cautious

[871] Waki'at of Shaik Faizi, PHI Persian Literature in Translation, the Packard Humanities Institute, http://persian.packhum.org/persian//. The work, containing a series of letters written to Akbar, was translated by
Lieutenant Prichard for Sir H. M. Elliot.

enough to make sure that his royal father, whose regal power he had usurped, would do so in oblivion; he was to be accorded no royal paraphernalia and rituals of any kind which would potentially sabotage his image as the current Emperor. Aurangzeb, thus, proposed that his father would go to his desired location by boat and not by land on an elephant from the royal stable. Permitting Shah Jahan to travel by land on his elephant could have proved disastrous for Aurangzeb, for that way it meant he was inviting a scope for the interaction between the former Emperor and the people. The re-appearance of Shah Jahan on his royal elephant in public could have surely led to speculations and 'might immediately raise a party in his favour, and that if he placed himself at their head, as people are inconstant, he might find means to recover the throne'.[872]

On the other hand, Shah Jahan, though his power was usurped, knowing about Aurangzeb's proposal, became reluctant to travel sans royal pomp and paraphernalia as befitting his rank and image. As a result, he discarded his desire to visit Jahanabad. Neither the reigning Emperor nor the former Emperor of the Mughal empire was willing to compromise one's public image.

[872] Tavernier, vol. I, p. 275.

Figure 5.1

In Azerbijan—Timur bestows a robe of honour on Amir Tahamtan who has come to pay his respects

Timur Nama: Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuria (History of the Timurids), Facsimile Edition Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, Patna

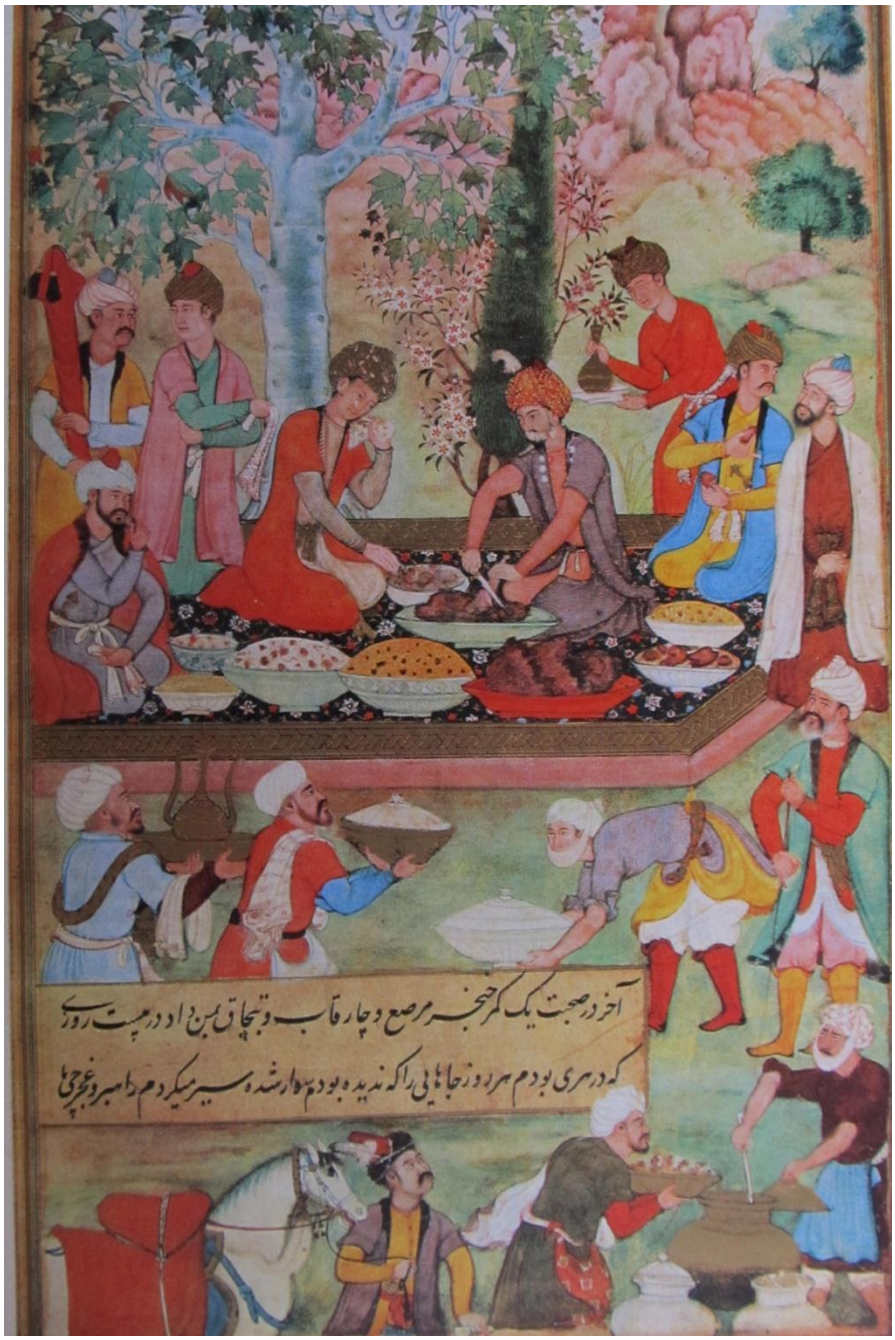

Figure 5.2

हिरात में मिर्ज़ाओं द्वारा दी गई दावत का मज़ा लेते हुए बाबर
बाबरनामा के रंगचित्र, राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय, नई दिल्ली

Figure 5.3

*Jahangir at Camp, c.*1620, Johnson Album

British Museum Exhibition, New Delhi

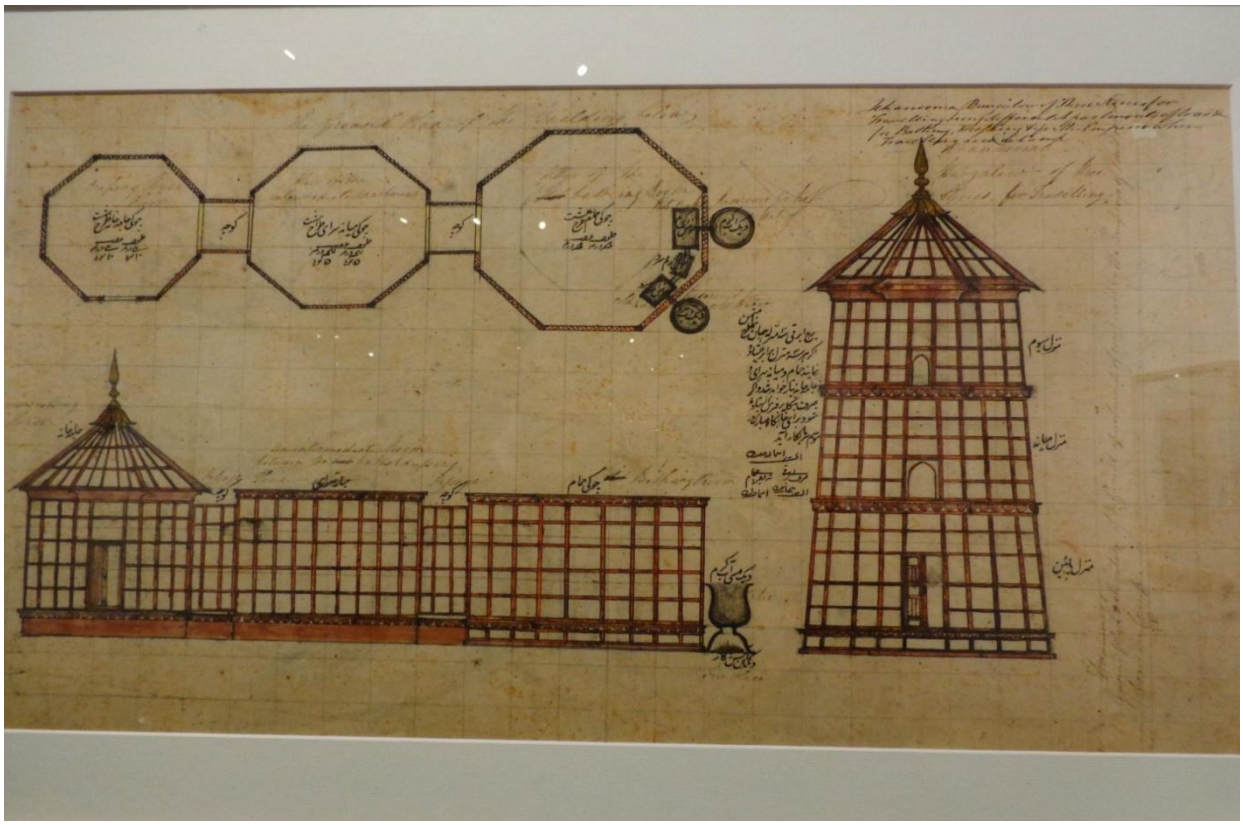

Figure 5.4

Travelling Bungalow for the Mughal Emperor, Delhi, *c.*1810
Courtesy: British Museum Exhibition, New Delhi

The inscription in the nineteenth century drawing reads: '[the] Emperor's travelling House or Bungalow made of wood, used by him when in Camp, the upper apartment is intended for Havaconnah or place for him to enjoy the air in, the lower for a Durbar, where he receives people, gives audience.' Abul Fazl had mentioned in his work, *The Ain-i-Akbari* about this collapsible structure and called it *du ashiyana manzil*.[873]

[873] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 55.

CHAPTER VI

In the later Mughal period the political power of the Mughal Emperor was dwindling. Earlier the power contestation used to be between the reigning Emperor and the rebelled prince or among the princes of the royal blood and the task of the nobles was to support one of them. In the later period since many of the princes were incarcerated, therefore, the nobles were directly enmeshed in power play and the princes were used as mere pawns to be in power and now instead of the royal princes fighting for the throne, it was the powerful nobles who set up and removed them to suit their interests. The nobles contested among themselves for power to wield greater influence on the Emperor; therefore, the nobility was divided into many factions and each faction attempted to hold the maximum sway over the Emperor, resulting into many political intrigues. The early stage of the later phase of the empire saw the rise of the powerful nobles like Zulfiqar Khan Nusrat Jang,[874] the Sayyid Brothers, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, etc., and the centrifugal tendency of the local powers. But from cultural and economic perspectives, studies have been showing a different picture. Shama Mitra Chenoy calls this period of the empire as the phase of 'cultural florescence'[875] even though the Mughal Emperors were no longer the de facto power wielders. Madhu Trivedi links the upsurge of different styles of music like *Marsiya Khwani*, *Khayal*, *Kabbit*, *Qawwali*, *Tarana*, *Jangla*, etc., and the rise of skilled singers and dancers (*Bhadeti*) especially to the reign of Muhammad Shah and therefore, she contends that Shajahanabad during this period was a leading center of cultural anthesis.[876] Catherine Asher observes that even when the British

[874] Zulfiqar Khan Nusrat Jang was the son of Asad Khan Asaf-ud-Daulah. He had been serving the Mughal empire since the reign of Aurangzeb who had taken him into the imperial service by appointing him to the rank of 300. The daughter of *Amir-ul-Umara* Shaista Khan who was the maternal uncle of Aurangzeb, was married to him. In the tenure of Aurangzeb he received titles and increase in his rank. In the 20th year he was given the title of I'tiqad Khan. His rank was increased too. In October, 1689, he captured the fortress of Raheri, the seat of Shivaji's eldest son, Sambhaji. Sambhaji's sons, mother, daughter and many of his prominent men were taken into custody. The elated Emperor honoured him with the title of Zulfiqar Khan and allotted him 3,000 *zat* and 2,000 *sawar*. In subsequent years there was a further increase in his rank. He now had the rank of 4,000 for capturing the fort of Nirmal. At the time of Aurangzeb's death, he enjoyed the rank of 6,000 *zat* and 6,000 *sawar*.*The Maathir-ul-Umara*, Vol. II, pp. 1033-37.

[875] Dargah Quli Khan, *Muraqqa-e-Dehli, The Mughal Capital in Muhammad Shah's Time*, tr. Chander Shekar, Deputy Publication, Delhi, p. xxxv.

[876] मधु त्रिवेदी, शाहजहानाबाद में संगीत-कलाओं का विकास, सम्पादिका मधु त्रिवेदी, *मध्यकालीन दिल्ली*, पाठ: 1-8, मुक्त शिक्षा विद्यालय, दिल्ली विश्वविद्याल, दिल्ली, 2011-12, pp. 40-5.

acquired hold over the Mughal capital Delhi, the Mughal Emperors continued to assume their regal responsibilities as they were still seen as 'symbols of a way of life and refined culture'[877] and the regal symbolisms were so potent that even the British could not undermine their connotations. As per Satish Chandra[878] Delhi's economy was not affected much even after Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 when he had forcefully made the Emperor, his nobles and inhabitants to gouge out a huge amount of wealth, for the loss of the wealth was basically non-circulating. Subsequently the trade continued to thrive, having had modest influence on the city's economy.

The authors of the *Maathir-ul-Umara*, Nawwab Samsam-ud-Daula Shah Nawaz Khan and his son, Abdul Hayy described Shah Jahanabad as a prosperous city. Their work records:

> As for a long time this city has been the seat of the royal standards, numerous edifices have been built and large numbers of people have taken up their residence all round the Fort, and all its four corners are inhabited. Owing to the great crowding and coming over of people from all seven climes every street and dwelling is filled up with goods and wares from all countries. All houses are full, as is becoming of all great cities, and in every shop owing to the abundance of the precious and rare commodities of all countries hundreds of trading caravans are busy.[879]

However the account tells us that after Nadir Shah invaded, the city witnessed a disastrous effect. Fortunately the effect was not enduring. The industries and production were thriving again. Music and festivity became a regular trademark of the inhabitants. Dargah Quli Khan too made valuable observations regarding the flourishing trade, and social and cultural vibrancy of the city. He had accompanied Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I, the independent Mughal Governor of the Deccan, to the Mughal capital.[880] He called Chandni Chowk 'a centre of recreation for the pleasure seekers and a gallery of rareties

[877] Catherine Asher, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 308.
[878] S. Chandra, *Cultural and Political Role of Delhi,* p. 206.
[879] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 273.
[880] The Nizam was summoned by the Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah to the imperial court to settle the political matters. Dargah Quli Khan stayed in the capital city from 1737 to 1741which means he was there before as well as after the invasion of Nadir Shah and had witnessed the effects of the invasion on the capital city and its people quite closely.

for the interested buyers'.[881] He noted that the place was full of numerous shops dealing in varieties of textiles, precious stones, perfumes and essence, weapons, crockeries, glass *huqqas*, and so many rare and unique things obtained from around the world that perhaps even the abodes of the aristocrats lacked such things.[882] He stated on the vast availability of exquisite objects in the shops at the Chandni Chowk: 'The assortment of rare and unique goods available in this market cannot be bought at one time even if the treasury of Qarun[883] was at one's disposal'.[884] Mir Sher 'Ali, Afsos, an Urdu writer too showered praises on the noted *bazaar*, underlining the city's bustling trade.[885] The thriving trade of the city and the cultural upsurge on one side and the waning of the Mughal imperial political power on the other side was one of the paradoxes of the early eighteenth century. Another paradox of the period is that the power of the Emperor was on the verge of decline, while a few nobles became so prominent that they undermined the power of the Emperor. This is extraordinary because the nobles were dependent on the Emperor for their social status; imperial favour was 'vital to a noble's prestige standing at court, and often even to his financial solvency'.[886] In the later Mughal period, especially during the tenures of the leading nobles such as Zulfiqar Khan (whose support and political manoeuvre enabled Jahandar Shah to sit on the Mughal throne), and the more blatant example of the Sayyid brothers (who dethroned Farrukh Siyar and enthroned the three

[881] *Muraqqa-e-Dehli*, p. 24.

[882] From the low-ranking to the high-ranking nobles, the streets of Chandni Chowk attracted a multitude of rich and flamboyant men. Dargah Quli Khan narrated one incident to accentuate his observation. Once a son of a deceased nobleman desired to take a stroll down the lanes of Chandni Chowk. His mother gave him a sum of one *lakh* rupees, saying that such paltry amount was not sufficient to buy rare and exotic items from the shops there, but he could use the amount to purchase some basic things. ibid., p. 25.

[883] Qarun was a paternal cousin to Musa (Moses). The Quran says, 'Qarun was doubtless, of the people of Moses' and that Allah had made him a man of proverbial wealth. '…such were the treasures We had bestowed on him that their very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men.' —Surah al-Qasas (The Narrations), 28:76. "For he is truly a lord of mighty good fortune!" Surah al-Qasas (The Narrations), 28:79. *The Quran*, p. 265.

[884] *Muraqqa-e-Dehli* , p. 25.

[885] 'Although all the bazars of it are superior to the whole world, still the Chandni Chauk is the light of the whole city, and every shop in it is without an equal in the world ; whatever things you see, they are worthy of kings; its courtyard too is so spacious, that the heart opens in it, and so clean, that a man may scatter rice there and eat it. The brokers of that bazar will not lift up their eyes to look at merchants, and the harberdashers of it think of jewelers ; the shop of one cloth merchant is equal to that of all the cloth merchants of Constantinople, and the banking-house of one banker is equal to that of all the bankers of Iran.' Afsos, Sher 'Ali, *The Araish-i mahfil; or The Ornament of the Assembly*, Major Henry Court, trans. from the Urdu, Calcutta Baptist Mission, Calcutta, 1882, pp. 53-4.

[886] Stephen Mennell, *Norbert Elias, Civilization and the Human Self-Image,* p. 85.

successive Emperors viz. Rafi-ud-Darjat[887], Rafi-ud-Daulah and Roshan Akhtar), the Emperor became dependent on them for their political standing. Yet again paradoxically no matter how politically potent the nobles became, still their political potency was checked and none could usurp the Mughal throne and sit on it; as per the convention the Mughal throne was to be only inherited by a Mughal prince.

To understand the interplay between power and the Mughal court rituals in the later Mughal phase, it is important to begin with the reign of Aurangzeb and examine that how the failure to perform or the attempt to do away with the established norms of comportment and rites proved fatal to the reigning Emperor's authority, that the discontinuation of the conventional customs meant disruption in the process and mechanisms through which the notions of kingship, power, legitimacy and hierarchy became intensely embedded in the Mughal political culture; the erosion in the concept of sovereignty, in the notions of service, favours and honour in turn brought the erosion in the public image of the Emperor and by the later phase of the empire, when the efficacy of the rituals was gone, the Emperor was no more in control of authoritative power. However since rituals are not without polarities, therefore, it is interesting to notice that though the political power of the Emperor was corroded, yet the Emperor remained the source of political legitimacy.[888] The efficacy of the rituals was not completely dissipated.

Aurangzeb and the Employment of Rituals as Political Ploys

[887] Rafi-ud-Darjat was the youngest son of Rafi-us-Shan, son of Bahadur Shah.

[888] As the fountainhead of political legitimacy, Percival Spear compares the ambiguous political state of the later Mughal Emperors with that of the Holy Roman Emperors when their empire was also experiencing a downfall. To quote Spear, "Emperor at Delhi was the source of law and the origin of their legal rights in India; they considered him much as medieval Europe regarded the Holy Roman Emperor, as one who might be cajoled or wheedled or intimidated, but one whose authority must always be formally respected. Like the whole of India, they had come to regard the Moghul Empire as something indestructible and irremovable, as the incarnation of all authority…" Further, "like the Roman Empire of the fifth century it retained its hold over the imagination even of those who were dismembering it… Every fresh usurpation was legalized by the issue of a 'farman' from Delhi, as when Dupleix produced one to uphold his claim for supremacy in the Deccan against the English, and the Company in Bengal, after defeating the Emperor Shah Alam in the field, relied on another formally to legalize its position." Percival Spear, *The Nabobs, A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India*, Curzon Press, Surrey, 1963, pp. 26-7.

The reign of Aurangzeb had begun with the flouting of conventions of the Empire. The usurpation of the Mughal Emperor had always resulted in the creation of an ill-image of the usurper. Only royal blood inherited the Mughal throne and that also after the demise of the Emperor. Protocols observed at the Mughal court were observed more strictly than the Safavids had done at their Persian Court,[889] even though the Persian culture was considered to be the elite/high culture in the Islamic world of the time. When Aurangzeb sat on the throne even when his Emperor Father was alive, this move of his marked a departure from the earlier tradition. Sydney J. Owen calls this 'a breach of allegiance', 'an act of high treason' and 'effectually arrested the flow of the old sentiments of reverence and devotion to the Head of the State, which Akbar and his successors had inspired.'[890] He further adds that it was the outcome of his act of usurpation that 'Genuine loyalty, personal devotion to such a man, were out of question: he could neither be loved, respected, nor trusted; and must rely, for obedience, on fear, force, cunning, and self-interested compliance'.

Before Aurangzeb's reign, the gift of *khilat* was indicative of the kind of relationship the giver and recipient shared. In earlier reigns, the award of *khilat* meant the inception or the reinforcement of the bond between the two and not the conclusion of it. It was a matter of honour and prestige. However, especially by the reign of Aurangzeb the metaphorical meaning of the bestowal of *khilat* had come to acquire a new dimension to it. The gift now generated fear in the minds of those who received it. It became the subject of threat to the recipient's life owing to the expansion in the motive behind its usage. Now the award of *khilat* could also mean the Emperor's desire to eliminate an unwanted entity from his court. Thus, it gradually acquired a means of inclusion and exclusion. But this exclusion from the court society was not a temporary one as we see the case with some other kinds. When a certain noble aroused the Emperor's displeasure, earlier either he was sent to Mecca or there was a decrease in his rank or forbidden to come to the court or so. Capital and gruesome punishments were too given by the Emperor. Discreet punishments were not frequent. Punishments to serious offenders were deliberately given in full view of the general populace or it was made known to the assembled grandees of

[889] See Mannuci.
[890] Sydney J. Owen, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, p. 33.

the court so as to give them a warning. The award of punishment was a way of exercising imperial power and therefore, it was to be demonstrated. But gifts and forms of entertainment became a ploy in the hands of Aurangzeb in order to achieve military success and political aim. By the way of feasting and entertainment, he had captured his brother Prince Murad during the war of succession and his trick of presenting poisoned robe of honour[891] also became quite notorious among his nobles and *mansabdars*. Niccolao Manucci had recorded instances of such secret ways of poisoning men by Aurangzeb.[892] Therefore, the men started dreading whenever they received imperial gifts or favour. And as the connotation attached to imperial favour underwent altercations, the relationship between the giver and the recipient too witnessed transformations.

The author of the *Seir Mutaqherin* deemed Aurangzeb as someone 'who under the veil of piety and of an austere virtue, knew how to conceal all the vices of a boundless covetousness, and an insatiable ambition'.[893] In order to capture Murad Baksh, his brother during the war of succession, he invited him and kept him entertained 'by ordering his officers to present him with their nuzurs'[894] and later when he was off guard, Aurangzeb slyly caught and incarcerated him. This way he had imprisoned and killed many of his relatives, twisting law to his advantage. But in order to 'save appearances' and 'to acquire a character of sanctity and submission to the law', he made the ecclesiastics extremely powerful.[895]

On his prohibition on the observation of *jharoka darshan*, the author remarked that the custom aided in creating a section of extremely loyal subjects called *darshaniyas* who would eat or drink nothing unless they had *darshan* of the reigning Emperor. But by

[891] It was because of this lethal facet attached to the award of *khilat* ceremony that some historians call it 'killer khilat'. Michelle Maskiell and Adrienne Mayor, 'Killer Khilats, Part 1: Legends of Poisoned Robes of Honour in India', *Folklore*, vol. 112, issue 2, 2001, pp. 23-45.
[892] Manucci received an anonymous letter, instructing the physician not to give any medical assistance to Mahabat Khan, a Mughal noble during Aurangzeb's time who was at the imperial target of assassination through poison. However, when the noble was secretly administered poison, Manucci immediately rushed to the ailing patient and extended his medical aid; thus, he was saved only to live for a few more days. Soon another attempt was made to poison Mahabat Khan and this time it proved fatal. He succumbed to 'fetid discharges, a sign that his bowels were ulcerated'. *A Pepys of Mogul India, 1653-1708*, pp. 149-150.
[893] Seid-Gholam Hossein-Khan, *The Seir Mutaqherin or Review of Modern Times: Being an History of India containing in general the reigns of the Seven Last Emperors of Hindostan*, vol. IV, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1926 (Ist pub.), rep. 1990, p. 126.
[894] Ibid., p. 128.
[895] Ibid., p. 138.

abolishing the tradition of *jharoka darshan*, the Emperor had disobliged 'to no purpose at all, an infinity of loyal subjects'.

The Emperor's deceit roused fear and suspicion among the nobles while the Emperor himself was not left devoid of the feelings of doubts and mistrust. Consequently, it 'alienated every heart'.[896] The Emperor couldn't trust his own royal family members, nobles and his subjects while the latter equally harboured the similar outlook for the Emperor.

Aurangzeb would instruct his ambassadors to behave deliberately in a certain bold way so that his actions would enrage the host ruler, giving Aurangzeb an opportunity to take an action against him by invading his territory. Therefore instead of building a cordial relation or acquiring information about the rulers of other territories through the means of exchange of envoys, Aurangzeb devised a plan of provoking the host rulers and thus, fulfilling his political ambition deceitfully. The Bijapuri kingdom of the Adil Shahi ruler and that of Haiderabad from the Qutubshahi ruler, Sultan Abul Hassan were procured through such means. Aurangzeb in search of an occasion to wage wars on these kingdoms and at the same time cautious enough that the cause for the wars would not fall on his shoulder but on the rulers of the respective kingdoms. He, anxious to acquire the territory and a famed diamond from the ruler of Haiderabad wrote a letter to him, reprimanding him for having appointed a Hindu Brahmin as his Prime Minister and appealed to remove him from the post. Abul Hassan on receiving the letter requested the Emperor to allot him some time so that he could find a replacement. Aurangzeb in his eagerness sent an ambassador from his imperial court who was a noble and enjoyed the position of the office of Comptroller of the Audience Hall. The ambassador was given the following instruction:

> "My motive for sending you to the Court of Haider-abad, is not solely for demanding a bit of stone, whether that Prince chooses to part with it or not ; — your business, take care, is to speak so boldly and with so much liberty to him, as

[896] Ibid., p. 146.

to make him lose his temper, and exhale himself in some expressions that may afford me a handle against him."[897]

The Sultan of Haiderabad received the Mughal ambassador with all due respect and honour. He even selected precious jewels from his personal collection for the Mughal Emperor as choice gifts from him. However no matter how bluntly he spoke with the Sultan, his anger could not be ignited. He reported:

> *"...in compliance to his instructions, he had made it a point to speak to the King of Haider-abad with so much liberty and so much unbecoming freedom, as might put him out of his guard, and excite his anger; but that so far from his scheme taking effect, the King always took care to speak in terms of modesty and deference."*[898]

Aurangzeb's descendants too resorted to such stratagems in order to expel undesired sections in the court circle. Prince Azimu-sh-Shan, the second son of Bahadur Shah I, during his tenure as the *subedar* of Bengal *Suba*, Bihar and Orissa, from 1697 to 1712 by his grandfather, Aurangzeb, attempted to get rid of Kar Talab Khan who was appointed by the Emperor as the *Diwan* of the *Suba*. The Khan delivered his work efficiently which pleased the Emperor so much that he showered rewards on him. This incited jealousy in the Prince. Moreover, the Prince was already annoyed with the *Diwan* as since his arrival, his sway over the *Suba's* revenue was reduced. Therefore, through the lure of rewards and promotions, he encouraged the *naqdi* [899]troops to catch him in a snare and kill him. Accordingly when the *naqdi* troops found the Khan riding out unattended, they ambushed him; but the Khan fought back bravely and managed to save his life. He directly went to the Prince and flouting all the required court protocols, and holding his dagger, he sat close to the Prince and warned him: "This riot was due to your instigation, desist from this course, or else at this moment I will take your life and give mine." The scared Prince immediately summoned the *naqdi* contingent with its commander, Abdul Wahed and in

[897] Ibid., p. 167.
[898] Ibid., p. 168.
[899] *Naqdi* troops were gentlemen troopers who were paid in cash in lieu of their service.

the presence of the *Diwan* instructed them to give up creating such turmoil. The Prince, hereafter, never bothered Kar Talab Khan.[900]

Sydney J. Owen opines that the nobles in the later Mughal phase became more powerful 'at the expense of the Imperial prerogative' and the Emperor in order to re-assert his imperial power resorted to 'an act of political treachery.'[901] Kalyan Singh and Bakhtmal from the imperial court in an undated *arzdasht* to Sawai Jai Singh writes that Muhammad Amin Khan had formed a plot to murder Qutb-ul-Mulk and Amir-ul-Umra by attacking them in the night when they were resting. He requested Emperor Jahandar Shah for his consent which acquired.[902] Muhammad Amin Khan murdered Amir-ul-umra and Moizuddin and that there was a rumour that Aizuddin Khan was also murdered. A condition was put before Asaf-ud-daulah by the Emperor that his life could be spared only after the submission of all the cash and property in the imperial treasury.[903]

Rituals were used for threatening. Ahmad Shah is said to have sent a warning to his powerful *Wazir*, Safdar Jang through the means of the gift of *khilat*. The *Wazir* during the course of the construction of his capital city, Faizabad for which he was using imperial funds, had received a *khilat* from the Mughal Emperor. The box which contained the gift also had an image of a goddess of cholera or plague called Mari Bhavani. The incident horrified the *Wazir* so much that he entirely called off the project.[904] The occurrence shows that whether the Mughal Emperor was in power or not, the rituals had not cease to exist though now they had turn out to be clearly vague in character, yet they were employed to send 'a powerful shorthand message'[905].

Bahadur Shah and Imperial Honours Abound

[900] *The Riyazu-s-Salatin*, pp. 248-250.
[901] Sydney J. Owen, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, p. 107.
[902] *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur*, (Rajasthani), Rajasthan State Archives, Govt. of Rajasthan, Bikaner, 1974, p. 72.
[903] *A Descriptive List of the Arzdashts (Persian) Addressed by the Various Officials to the Rulers of Jaipur (1707 to 1720 A.D.)*, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, p. 34.
[904] Also see, Michelle Maskiell and Adrienne Mayor, 'Early Modern Legends of Poison Khila'ts in India', Stewart Gordon, *Robes of Honour: Khil'at in Pre-colonial and Colonial India*, Oxford university Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 98.
[905] Ibid., p. 98.

After the demise of Aurangzeb, the nobles who had been living in fear and suspicion became over-zealous to establish their political hold in the empire. Itching for power each faction tried to bring the reigning Emperor under its control while simultaneously the nobles became over-conscious of their status, compelling the Emperor every now and then to pay heed to their mounting demands. Before the accession too, as Prince Muazzam he had been forbearing and conciliatory even in the face of severe defiance of protocols at his court. When he was appointed as the Viceroy of the Deccan by Aurangzeb, he had two of the royal princes of Bikaner, Padam Singh and Mohan Singh, sons of Rao Karan Singh at his service. One day a pet deer of Mohan Singh was captured by Muhammad Mir Tuzuk (the Master of Ceremonies) and the brother-in-law of the prince known by the name of Kotwal. On learning about the appropriation of his pet deer, Mohan Singh with his brother went to rescue it. In the Audience hall of the Prince, *Chitrang-Mahal* at Aurangabad when the *darbar* was held by the prince, heated argument resulted into a violent tussle. Defying all court protocols, both the parties (Mohan Singh and Mir Tuzuk along with Kotwal) drew their swords. Mohan Singh was severely wounded in the fight. Hearing the commotion, Padam Singh who was smoking *huqqa* in the lounge rushed to the scene and finding his brother in the critical condition, killed Mir Tuzuk and Kotwal then and there in the Audience Hall of the prince. The prince and the officers ran away from the spot in order to save their lives.[906] Thereafter Padam Singh[907] took the dead body of his brother and held a meeting with all the Rajput princes of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Haroti, *et al.*, seeking their support. All agreed to side with the Rathore prince and thus they abandoned the imperial army and decided to go back to their respective homes. The prince in order to win back the support of the Rajput contingent sent a noble who informed Padam Singh that the prince had forgiven his offence; in fact, he approved of his course of action at the Audience Hall. Yet the Rajput prince was unwilling to

[906] Like Amar Singh, Padam Singh too is highly revered in the Rajput traditions. The Ganga Government Museum at Bikaner displays a painting capturing the event. However the placard of the museum mistakenly describes the occurrence of the incident at the Emperor's *darbar*. Rajvi Amar Singh in his work, *Mediaeval History of Rajasthan* emphasizes that the incident happened before Aurangzeb had arrived in the Deccan in the pursuit of his son, Prince Akbar to chastise his son. Before this, Prince Muazzam was appointed as the governor of the Deccan and it was during his tenure as the governor of the Deccan that the incident occurred at his *durbar*. See figure 6.2.

[907] Padam Singh had earlier foiled the conspiracy of Aurangzeb to arrest or assassinate his father, Rao Karan of Bikaner. Rajvi Amar Singh, *Mediaeval History of Rajasthan*, vol. I, pub. by Rajvi Amar Singh, Rani Bazar, Rajasthan, 1992, p. 360.

return to the imperial service. Finally when the Rajput contingent had left the camp of the prince, the prince himself followed them and cajoled them to return.[908]

Soon after the accession of Bahadur Shah I, grave enmities erupted among nobles and they started hankering for more power. Munim Khan who supported Bahadur Shah in the war of succession was rewarded the post of *Wazir* for his valuable service. While Asad Khan who earlier was Aurangzeb's *Wazir* but had sided with Azam Shah along with his son Zulfiqar Khan during the civil war was pardoned and reinstated to the post of first *Bakshi*. However, Munim Khan felt slighted at the treatment he was accorded. The formalities he had to observe in the presence of Asad Khan, while the latter was holding his audience as *Wakil*, made him appear Asad Khan's subordinate. He had to perform the required salutation and then stand before the *Wakil* till the official documents were checked and signed. The protocol made Munim Khan felt humiliated and therefore, he refused to abide by it on the pretext of Asad Khan being too old for the post and that the old man should retire.[909]

Bahadur Shah was a very compassionate and generous man and was never strict in rewarding punishments to offenders. After the war of succession in which he emerged victorious, defeating his most strong contender, Azam Shah, he was extremely disappointed to find the severed head of his brother brought before him by Rustam Dil Khan with an expectation to receive a handsome reward. The Emperor was furious and rebuked Rustam Khan for his action.[910] After his accession to the Mughal throne, in accordance with an oath he had taken that if he should become the Mughal Emperor, he would never decline any request, he granted countless titles, ranks and positions, as a consequence of which they lost their significance they denoted. No longer were they considered as signals of prestige and privilege. Owing to the largesse and the inability of the Emperor to say "No", few nobles came to acquire enormous power in their hands. Hidayat Ullah Khan was promoted to the rank of 7,000 and granted the title of Sadullah Khan. One of the principal offices i.e. the *Darogha-i-dak-u-sawanih* or Superintendent of

[908] The incidence has been recorded by Bhim Sen, the writer of the Persian account, the *Nuskha-i-Dilkhusha*, Col. Todd, P. W. Powlett, Jonathan Scott (Persian Secretary to the Governor-general of India, Warren Hastings), Dayal Das, and G. H. Ojha. Ibid., pp. 360-61.
[909] William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. I, p. 39.
[910] Ibid., p. 33.

the Postal Department was also given to him. The noble now enjoyed 'half of the supreme power'.[911]

In former days ranks and titles earlier awarded to encourage the spirit of competition among nobles by honouring a few on the basis of their exceptional performance while encouraging others to strive diligently to attain such marks of distinction. There were certain titles such as *farzand*,[912] etc., which were only granted to an elect group of devoted men. The implication of granting such a title was actually a way of securing the position of the empire and of the Emperor himself. There were also affectionate terms addressed for establishing a bond between the Emperor and his men. Babar generally called a noble named Daulat Khan 'father'.[913] Yamin-ud-Daula Asaf Khan, who was the *Wakil* of the empire, was addressed as '*Ammu*' (Uncle) affectionately by Shah Jahan.[914] Hierarchy of titles encouraged and maintained hierarchy of men associated with the imperial court.

Now the titles like Raja, Rai and Khan had become so common that almost everyone at the court seemed to be known by one of them. High ranks too were lavishly granted to many. People of low rank 'obtained every day grades of six or seven thousand horse'.[915] Discerning the state of affairs and the repercussion of the Emperor's disposition on the court, Zulfiqar Khan who was appointed to the office of the *Mir Bakshi* by Bahadur Shah after the death of the *Wazir*, Munim Khan found an opportunity to advance his own interests. He was offered the office of the *Wazir*. Zulfiqar Khan expressed his desire to

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[911] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 645.

[912] The title of *farzand* was used in the colonial period as well. The title was awarded to the Indian local potentates as a mark of their incorporation into the British colonial rule in India. Here are some of the examples of the titles in Persian (the official court language of the Mughals) awarded on behalf of the British crown as recorded in the Foreign office:

Farzand-i-Arjumand Akidat Paiwand Daulat-i-Inglishia (Beloved and Faithful Son of the English Government)

Farzand-i-Dilband Rashikhul-Iti-k'ad Daulat-i-Inglishia (Beloved and Trusty Son of the English Government)

Farzand-i-khas-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia (Favourite Son of the English Government)

Farzand-i-Saadat-i-Nishan-i-Hazrat-i-Kaisar-i-Hind (A Son Emblematical of the Good Auspices of Her Majesty the Empress of India)

Roper Lethbridge, *The Golden Book of India; A Genealogical and Biographical Dictionary of the Ruling Princes, Chiefs, Nobles, and other Personages, Titled or Decorated, of the Indian Empire, with an appendix for Ceylon*, Marton & Co., London, 1990, pp. xvi- xvii.

[913] Ibid., p. 87.

[914] *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 19.

[915] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, p. 17.

accept the post but also wanted to keep all his old appointments and that his father, Asad Khan was to be nominally appointed as the *Wazir* of the empire. Clearly, Zulfiqar Khan was intending to grapple power in his hands to a considerably high degree through merging a number of significant posts and placing all under one person. The Emperor, perceiving his intention, cancelled the appointment but kept the post of the *Wazir* vacant so as not to offend the Khan.[916] However the ambitious Khan was made the *Wazir* during the reign of Jahandar Shah for his significant contribution in the war of succession. Thus from the reign of Bahadur Shah, every influential noble contested fiercely for the post of *Wazir* or *Mir Bakshi*. Some had become so powerful that they held two or three important posts simultaneously which further put the Emperor in a vulnerable position. The *Wazir* would employ his power in eliminating the leading nobles of the other factions. On the other hand, the Emperor would conspire with his favourites to eliminate the domineering nobles.

There were frequent cases of impertinence and disregard for convention. The Emperor's sister, Zinat-un-nisa refused to offer felicitations on his victory and accession and went into mourning over the death of Muhammad Azam Shah. He increased her allowances and made her *Padshah Begam*.[917] Ajit Singh, the ruler of Marwar too ignored the required protocols expected from the local potentates on the eve of such important occasions. He had sent no customary felicitations and gifts to the Emperor.[918] A noble called Ghaziuddin Khan was promoted as the governor of Gujarat. He went to his assigned place without waiting on and taking permission from the Emperor. This set an example to other courtiers. Raja Jai Singh Kachhwaha and Ajit Singh Rathor followed suit. Both had retired to their respective *jagir* without taking leave from the court.[919]

It is fascinating to note some of the remarks regarding Bahadur Shah's genial personality in comparison to his predecessor, Aurangzeb. The Gazetteer of Lahore district, compiled between 1870 and 1874 by F. Cunningham, Barrister-at-Law, on account of 'a great contrast' between Aurangzeb's 'bigotry' and Bahadur Shah's 'toleration', recorded: 'It

[916] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 1038.
[917] William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. I, p. 39.
[918] Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign of Muhammad Shah, 1719-1748*, p. 46.
[919] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, p. 18.

has been said, indeed, that 'had Bahadur Shah, and not Aurangzeb, succeeded Shahjehan, the family of Timur might have still sat on the throne of Delhi.'[920]

Jahandar Shah and the Exaltation of Upstarts

The institution of monarchy is not based on egalitarian principle. One of the requisites for this form of government is creating and sustaining hierarchy at the apex of which lies the King. In a court society, every individual was conscious of his rank as well as the others. In the war of succession, the victory came to Jahandar Shah unexpectedly. Soon after plundering the camp of Prince Muizuddin and finally killing him, he took his favourite mistress, Lal Kunwar and retired to his harem, spending the night in merry-making, drinking and being entertained by dancing-girls. The next morning on the order of Zulfiqar Khan he was dragged out of the harem as he was in a heavily drunken state by the noble's trustworthy eunuch and with his head uncovered and clothes in extreme mess, he was placed upon his elephant and fetched to the battlefield. Rafi-us-Shan, the Prince who was Jahandar Shah's contender for the imperial throne, fought valiantly; however he lost his life in the battle. Jahandar Shah became the successor of Bahadur Shah. Earlier before the battle began at the crack of dawn, Rafi had sent his most important eunuch of his harem to Jahandar Shah to congratulate him on the eve of his success in defeating Prince Muizuddin. The scenario he confronted in the women's apartment of Jahandar Shah compelled him to burst into peals of laughter. The drunken prince was sound asleep.[921] After this decisive battle was won and Jahandar Shah became the Emperor, he appointed Zulfiqar Khan as the *Wazir* and left the concerns of the state in his hands[922] while the *Wazir* assigned all his tasks to his *Diwan*, Sabha Chand Khatri, spending his time in merry making perfectly like the Emperor.[923]

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[920] *Gazetteer, Lahore District, 1883-4*, Compiled and Published under the authority of the Punjab Government, Sangemeel Publication, Lahore, 1989, p. 25.
[921] *The Seir Mutaqherin*. vol. I. pp. 33-34.
[922] Zulfiqar Khan was the *Wazir*, the *subehdar* of the Deccan and also the deputy of the *Wakil-i-Mutlaq*, thus, holding three important posts simultaneously during the period of Jahandar Shah, who only acted on his advice.
[923] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 1040.

Jahandar Shah had himself associated largely with low ranking people who were promoted to high ranks. Lal kunwar was a common dancer. The Emperor granted her several distinguished privileges. She was given the title of Imtiazmahal-Begum (the Exalted Princess of the Seraglio). She sat in the *darbar* close to the throne and the nobles were placed below her. She was given more than fifteen *crores* of rupees from the imperial treasury.[924] She was permitted to ride on an elephant with *chatr* which was considered to be a very high imperial favour. Her milk-brother was granted an extremely grand title, *Amir-ul umara* (Prince of Princes) and every day some favour was showered on him. Her brother, Khushal Khan was placed in command of seven thousand horses. Niamat Khan, her uncle was made a Commander of five thousand horses; he was also made the governor of Multan which was greatly disapproved by the *Wazir*. The Emperor in his desire to further exalt Khushal Khan made up his mind to remove an accomplished noble from the post of the viceroyalty of Akbarabad and replace him with the incompetent brother of Lal Kunwar. Accordingly he issued an order to reinforce his wish. However Zulfiqar Khan declined to put a seal on the imperial order unless he received a thousand guitars and seven thousand timbrels. When the Emperor in the *durbar* meekly enquired about such an unusual demand of the *Wazir*, the Khan replied, "For, as the nobility, your servants, are, from father to son, in possession of serving the crown in Viceroyalties, Governments, and such other employments ; and the custom of your Imperial ancestors has been only to amuse themselves with dancers and singers, whose merits it was customary to reward only by pensions and bounties ; so soon as these last shall aspire to dignities and Governments, and shall contribute to take possession of them, there shall remain then no other party for your nobility but that of betaking themselves to the profession just forsaken by the dancers and singers". Therefore the demand he had made was in order to give those guitars and timbrels to the nobles so that they could equip themselves with the skills of singers and musicians and 'earn their bread as well as any others'. The crisp reply of the *Wazir* left the Emperor speechless and Khushal Khan dejected, for the appointment was cancelled after the incident.[925]

[924] Salma Bano, Jahandar Namah: An Unpublished Source of the Eighteenth Century, *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, vol. IV, Issue 2, Februaury, 2016, p. 5.
[925] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, pp. 35-6.

The response of the *Wazir*, Zulfiqar Khan to the Emperor's policy of exalting lower class people was not unfounded. Royalty and nobility secured each other's power and privileges and therefore, there was interdependence between the two. The nobility preserved its own privileges through the power and decorum of the State.[926] Zulfiqar Khan Nusrat Jang had been in the royal service since the reign of Aurangzeb and had played a significant role in many major battles. He had earned his titles, ranks and imperial favours through the years of experience and expertise. His father, Asad Khan Asaf-ud-Daula was a favourite with Shah Jahan and rose to prominence on account of his accomplishments.[927] His grandfather, Zulfiqar Khan Qamaranlu was a distinguished noble too at the court of Jahangir. He was equally considered to be the most excellent singer in the Persian style, outshining even the most renowned singers of Persia.[928] A study of eminent Mughal nobles reflects that their association with the aristocracy was not a mere co-incidence but their ancestors too belonged to this elect class and thus a tradition with them. In court society real social differences were not to be concealed but clearly marked. Social reality of a noble was constructed through his rank and prestige accorded to him by the Emperor. Hence the nobles were distinctly 'beholden to external appearances', 'sensitive to what they regarded as the 'incorrect' behaviour of another, to the slightest infringement or threat to any outward privilege'.[929] In the later Mughal period when the Emperor started promoting lower class people at his court, social differences were getting blurred. This was detrimental not only for the nobles but the Emperor himself. A master exists as long as his servant accepts and acknowledges his master's authority. Through the court protocols and ceremonies, a class of sophisticated and distinguished men was created. A cultured prince or noble was expected to demonstrate his competence in appointments, speech, code of conduct and dress. The early court historians put a lot of emphasis on highlighting how lofty was the lineage of

[926] Raymond Williams, *Culture & Society: 1780-1950*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1958, p. 123.
[927] For a brief biography of Asad Khan Asaf-ud-Daula Jamla-al-Mulk, please see *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. I., pp. 270-279.
[928] Zulfiqar Khan Qadanlu was the son of Zulfiqar Khan. His father was in the service of Shah Abbas I of Persia and was appointed as the *Amir-ul-umara* of Azerbaijan. Farhad Khan Qadanlu, the elder brother of Zulfiqar Khan Qadanlu enjoyed the status of being one of the leading nobles at the court of the Shah. Owing to the unfavourable circumstances, the grandfather of Zulfiqar Khan had to flee from Persia and come to Hindustan. Ibid., vol. II, pp. 1045-47.
[929] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, pp. 93-4.

the Mughal Emperor and that the nobles they employed at their court were also not without any association to a grand lineage.[930]

Also, the fact that Jahandar Shah in order to please Lal Kunwar was attempting to remove a distinguished and an experienced noble from his post so that his consort's brother, Khushal Khan who enjoyed nothing but ill-repute could be granted such a prestigious post was surely a matter of grave concern for the preservation of old conventions. A cultured Mughal prince or noble was expected to demonstrate his competence in appointments, speech, code of conduct and dress. He was so famed for his taste and refinement that it was said of him that he 'smoked scented tobacco[931] blended with hashish in his *huqqa* (water pipe) and crushed precious gems such as emeralds and pearls in his wine'.[932] While the up-starts[933] at the later Mughal court became so infamous for their conducts that they aided in lowering the prestige of the Mughal throne. Khushal Khan committed so many transgressions that Zulfiqar Khan had to finally imprison him and confiscate his entire property.[934]

In the later Mughal period there were frequent tussles over titles, ranks, posts and honours. The court witnessed the inclusion of many men and women belonging to ordinary lineage. Each night the court during Jahandar Shah's reign used to be crowded with *kalawantan*. Naked and intoxicated, they danced. The author of the *Jahandar Namah*, Nuruddin Faruqi expressed his utter angst and disgust at the misconduct and the violation of court traditions done by them and the silence and the failure of the Emperor to check their misdemeanour. In such night gatherings at times they were signaled by Lal Kunwar to slap the Emperor on his head, shouting "Break, Break" (*bshikan-bshikan*). Frolicking with the *kalawantan* and walking with them to the door of the tent, Jahandar

[930] *अकबरी दरबार*, भाग-३, p. 236.

[931] The Portuguese introduced tobacco to India in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Jagat Vir Singh, 'Use of Intoxicants in Medieval Rajasthan', *Medieval India, A Miscellany*, vol. I, Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969, p. 270.

[932] Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad*, p. 138.

[933] Seid Gholam Hossein Khan, the writer of the *Seir Mutaqherin* refers to the relatives of Lal Kunwar as up-starts since they became the recipients of many imperial favours purley because of their association with her.

[934] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, pp. 39-40.

Shah honoured them with fresh rewards and gifts. Thus this class of people came to acquire imperial favour and wealth.[935]

Farrukh Siyar: An Emperor of Extremes

Jahandar Shah could not retain his position as the Emperor of the Mughal Empire even for a year and within a span of three or four months, he was succeeded by his nephew, Farrukh Siyar. The new Emperor inaugurated his reign with unmitigated brutality. After Zulfiqar Khan along with his father, Asad Khan had surrendered to the Emperor,[936] the *Wazir* was seized while Asad Khan was asked to leave. Zulfiqar Khan was murdered cruelly. Jahandar Shah was executed too on the very same day. Farrukh Siyar entered the capital city triumphantly with the display of the dead bodies of the two. Jahandar Shah's head was fastened to the tip of a lance and his body tossed on an elephant. The corpse of Zulfiqar Khan was put upside down and pilloried.[937] The royal princes received harsh punishments too. Seid Gholam Hossein Khan of the *Seir Mutaqherin* calls the relentless and rash murders of so many prominent people of the empire as 'unjust' and 'unnecessarily perpetrated, excited so much terror'.[938]

Akbar completely disapproved of the unwarranted use of rewards and punishments as one of the ways to govern a kingdom. He was of the opinion: 'Sovereignty consists in distinguishing degrees of circumstances and in meting out reward and punishment in proportion thereto'.[939] The reign of Shah Abbas I of Persia was known for eliminating men in the imperial service. Akbar wrote to him a number of times against this policy of the Shah. It was because of the repressive policy of the Shah that some of his nobles had to leave the royal service and escape to Hindustan and were recruited in the Mughal service. Zulifqar Khan Nusrat Jang's grandfather, Zulfiqar Khan Qadanlu was forced to seek a safe haven at the Mughal court because his father and brother were executed by

[935] Jahandar Namah, p. 5.
[936] Farrukh Siyar through the means of a false promise had the father and son (Asad Khan and Zulfiqar Khan) captured. *The Maathir-ul-umara*, vol. I, p. 276.
[937] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, pp. 1042-3.
[938] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, p. 63.
[939] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. III, p. 450.

the order of the Shah.[940] The Persian noble as well as his successors rose to such distinction in the Mughal aristocratic circle that when speaking of the Mughal nobility especially in the later Mughal period they remain an indispensable component. Hence the execution of Zuliqar Khan Nusrat Jang by Farrukh Siyar even when the noble had surrendered himself to the new Emperor was a great loss to the empire. As per the earlier tradition of the empire, on the eve of the accession of a new Emperor, he would exercise his legitimate authority by granting numerous titles, ranks, new appointments, gifts and other imperial favours. The confidential and faithful nobles of the predecessor were retained and no attempts were made to execute them. Prince Salim on becoming Nur-ud-din Jahangir Padshah had pardoned all the nobles who had either sided with Akbar after the prince's rebellion or had espoused the cause of his eldest son, Prince Khusrau and tried to convince Akbar to proclaim him as his successor. The new Emperor was determined that he 'would exact no retribution for past deeds'.[941] Accordingly Raja Man Singh was honoured with a *charqab* (a vest), a jeweled sword and a horse from the imperial stable and was restored in his post of the governor of the province of Bengal. Abdur Razzaq Mamuri who had sided with Akbar during Prince Salim's rebellion, was reinstated in his previous position of the *Bakshi* and was honoured with a *khilat*. Amin-ud-daula who was his *bakshi* when he was the prince and had fled from his court to work under Akbar, was awarded the office of *Atish-i-begi* (Head of the Artillery). Said Khan, a confidential noble of Akbar was made the governor of the Punjab. His son, Prince Khusrau who had the support of a certain section of the nobles at the court as Akbar's successor, received one *lakh* of rupees.[942]

On his accession Farrukh Siyar received no congratulatory letter and *peshkash* from Raja Ajit Singh Rathor of Jodhpur. The Emperor sent the *Bakshiu'l-mamalik*, Husain Ali Khan to chastise the offender. The Raja, however, could not withstand the imperial force. He submitted and sent the *peshkash* along with the *dola* of his daughter.[943] The *peshkash* from the Raja to the Emperor constituted fifty *lakhs* of rupees in cash while another fifty

[940] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, pp. 1045-6.
[941] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 15.
[942] Ibid., vol. I, pp. 12-5. Though Prince Khusrau was blinded later because of his repeated efforts to contest his father's power. The order was not impetuous.
[943] *Iqbalnama*, pp. 3-4.

lakhs were obtained from the jewels he offered. Fifty Iraqi and Arabian horses with gold and silver embroidered trappings, embedded with semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli and ten elephants with gold and silver *howdas* were sent too.[944]

The *dola* of the daughter of Ajit Singh sent by him was a matter of utmost significance for the Mughals. Earlier matrimonial alliances were used as one of the ways through which the political ties between the Mughals and the Rajputs were strengthened; now the Rajputs sought to forge the ties among themselves. The Rajput rulers were congregating frequently and there were significant discussions over their political courses of action, their political alliances and allegiance. The work, Vir Vinod of Kaviraj Shyamaldas throws light on some of the major issues of the meetings: अब हमेशह सलाह होने लगी, कि मुसलमानोंको हिंदुस्तानसे निकालकर महाराणाको बादशाह बनाया जावे...[945] It was the result of these meetings that Maharana Amar Singh of Mewar gave his daughter Bai Chandra Kunwar in marriage to Jai Singh of Amber who agreed to make the princess his chief queen and promised that the daughter born of the union would never be given in marriage to a Muslim ruler.[946] Ajit Singh of Marwar was already married to the daughter of Maharana Amar Singh's uncle, Gaj Singh.[947] Therefore, by this period the inclusion of the Rajput ladies into the Mughal harem became negligible; the only exception being the marriage of Ajit Singh's daughter with Farrukh Siyar. This explains the emphasis put on arranging the most splendid marriage celebration at the Mughal palace which occurred in the later Mughal period. Hussain Ali Khan, in particular, was very meticulous about the preparations, 'he made it a point to give that solemnity all the magnificence and all that splendour for which Hindostan is famous; and he made such preparations both for the bride and the bride-groom as exceeded all that had been done for the greatest Radjahs and kings of Decan, or for even the magnificent Emperors of Hindostan. The furniture,

[944] Shiv Das Lakhnawi, *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam*, tr. Syed Hasan Askari, Janaki Prakashan, Patna, 1980, pp. 4-5.
[945] However Ajit Singh was not in favour of this proposition. Kaviraja Shyamaldas, *Vir Vinod*, vol. II, Part II, p. 772.
[946] Ibid., p. 771.
[947] R.S.Sangwan, *Jodhpur and the Later Mughals, 1707-1752 A.D*, p. 8.

jewels, and illuminations[948] surpassed by much any thing that had been done by the Emperor himself'.[949]

Shiv Das, the author of the *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam* records instances of Farrukh Siyar's generosity to such an extent that it undermined the prestige and protocols of the court and the Emperor. The Emperor out of magnanimity bestowed numerous favours on Muhammad Murad, the *Mir-Tuzuk*. The noble without any valuable service rendered to the empire was promoted to a very high rank of 7000 *zat* and 7000 *sawar* along with a high sounding title, I'tiqad Khan, Ruknu'd-daulah, Farrukhshahi. He was also granted not one or two but 500 *khilats* (each containing six pieces of cloth), a magnificent *Jahangiri* bed, precious stones, fifty *lakhs* of rupees in cash, 30 royal elephants and 50 horses of Iraqi and Arabian breeds with saddles coated in gold and silver. A choice *jagir* from the Gujarat Suba, Akbarabad and also the imperial capital city, Shah Jahanabad was given to him. Every time he went to the *darbar*, new favour was conferred upon him. One day in

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[948] Shiv Das Lakhnawi informs that a huge amount was spent on illuminations. For fireworks, rupees one *lakh* was spent and another one *lakh* was splurged on illuminations and other preparations for the royal wedding. *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam*, pp. 5-6.
Firework as a part of the royal wedding celebration was one of the essential aspects of the Rajput-Mughal matrimonial alliances. This was a customary marriage ceremony among the Hindus. Badauni records that when Prince Salim was married to the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das, 'all the ceremonies, which are customary among the Hindus, such as lighting the fire & c...' were observed. Badauuni, vol. II, p. 352.
In the times of Jahangir, when Prince Khurd was wedded to the daughter of Muzaffar Husain Mirza, son of Sultan Husain Mirza who was the son of Bahd Mirza, the son of Shah Ismail Safawi and on the eve of Prince Shahriyar's marriage, there is no mention of the arrangement of illuminations as one of the many celebrations like the feast of *kar-i-khair* (consummation of marriage), the *hinna-bandi* (application of *hinna* on the hands of a bride) ceremony, gift ceremony, etc. TUJ, vol. I, p. 159, vol. II, p. 202.
By the reign of Shah Jahan, illuminations as a part of marriage ceremony had already been adopted well by the Mughals and it became one of the important attractions not only of the Mughal-Rajput matrimonial alliances but also when the bride was not a Rajput royal lady. To celebrate Prince Dara Shikoh's marriage to the daughter of Prince Parwiz, Shah Jahan had made a grand arrangement for the illumination ceremony. 'By His Majesty's command, the gardens beneath the royal chambers and the grounds below the audience balconies, as well as the boats upon the Jumna, were illuminated with lamps; and fireworks, which had been provided at his private expense, were displayed on the banks of the Jumna…'. *Shah Jahan Nama*, p. 92.
For the marriage of Prince Muhammad Shah Shuja with the daughter of Mirza Rustam which was held just after a few days of the above mentioned marriage of Prince Dara Shikoh, on the day of the *hinna-bandi* ceremony, a grand display of lamps and fireworks was put up by the future bride's kinsmen. From the royal family too, a magnificent show of fireworks was provided. 'At the close of the day, His Majesty took his seat at the balcony (*jharoka*) of the Forty-Pillared Hall; and the Princes Muhammad Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh, along with Yamin al-Daula and all the nobles, proceeded at the august command to His Royal Highness's residence and conducted him along the river bank into the royal presence. During his progress thither, many bright lamps and fireworks–the most beautiful that can be conceived–were exhibited on all sides. Ibid., p. 93.
[949] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, p. 76.

the imperial durbar the Emperor showered on the noble trays of expensive rings with embedded precious stones from the *Jawahir Khana*. This was explicitly resented by other nobles present there. Their contention was that 'it was against the rule and etiquette of sovereignty to exalt the rank to this extent in a single stretch and place absolute trust in one of the attendants all at once'. Nevertheless the Emperor paid no attention to the discontent the incident created among the nobles. In consequence of this, nobles like Sayyid Abdullah Khan and others withdrew their dedication towards the affairs of the empire.[950]

After some days of the above mentioned incident at the court, the Emperor ordered Sayyid Abdullah Khan to send Chura Jat and Ratan Chand to the imperial court. The Khan refused to send Ratan Chand on the ground that he was his personal employee and was not associated with the state affairs while Chura Jat[951] was brought by him in accordance with the royal instruction. The defiance shown by the Khan infuriated the Emperor and since then he started scheming against the noble in order to terminate him. One day when Sayyid Abdullah Khan went to the imperial *darbar* at the *diwan-i-khas*, the Emperor in order to capture the Khan had a portion of his troopers hidden in the assembly hall who were to seize the Khan once they were given a signal. Though the plan was frustrated and Abdullah Khan was able to escape the intended assault on him. The event left him utterly suspicious and cautious. He recruited 30 thousand horsemen and the equal number of foot soldiers with the support from other Sayyids of Barha. He summoned his brother, *Amir-ul-umara* Husian Ali Khan Bahadur, the *nazim* of the Deccan *Subas* to come to his rescue immediately with his army. On the other hand, Farrukh Siyar summoned Nizam-ul-mulk, the *faujdar*[952] of the *sarkar* of Muradabad. The Emperor promised him the office of the *wizarat* for his assistance in getting rid of Abdullha Khan but after reaching the court and witnessing the dejected condition of the court, he declined the offer. Subsequently Sarbaland Khan Bahadur, the *nazim* of Patna

[950] *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam*, pp. 27-28.
[951] Chura Jat was fortifying his place. Raja Jai Singh was sent to chastise him. After a siege of one and a half year and by spending an amount of two crores of rupees, Chura Jat agreed to submit to the Mughal authority and offer his *peshkash* of 30 *lakhs* of rupees to the Emperor. Sayyid Abdullah Khan was directed to bring the Jat to the imperial court. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
[952] *Faujdar* was a title awarded to the commander of the forces of a province. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, pp. 49-50.

was called with an army to the court. He too declined the office of the *wizarat* on knowing the nature of the task. Finally Husain Ali Khan Bahadur in response to his brother's supplication marched from the Deccan to the imperial capital on the false pretext of bringing Prince Muhammad Akbar, released by Raja Sahu, to the court. Once he reached the court, many old customs of the court were flouted and in the end, Farrukh Siyar was incarcerated;[953] the imperial treasury was seized. Farrukh Siyar was replaced with Rafi-ud-Darajat, the prince who was earlier spending his life in prison.[954] The extent of control which the two brothers exercised after overthrowing Farrukh Siyar is evident from the manner in which the order to execute him was carried out. In the *durbar* when the blinding of the Emperor was settled on, Qutb-ul-Mulk presented his own antimony-box (*surmadan*) to Najm-ud-Din 'Ali Khan. The latter obeyed the noble and blinded the captured Emperor.[955] It is believed that the Saiyyids executed distinguished nobles like Sadullah Khan, Hidayat Kesh Khan and Saidi Qasim, etc. immediately after the accession of Farrukh Siyar, but the executions were carried out on the basis of a forged letter of a royal member. In the case of the execution of Farrukh Siyar, there was no need to resort to such ploys and also no need to wait upon the imperial order which was against the imperial convention. Even in the times of Babur and Humayun when the court protocols and conventions were in the mode of formulation, punishments to offenders were ordered by the Emperor. None of the nobles could administer the course of punishment and that too in the imperial *darbar*.

Muhammad Shah: Invasions of the Imperial Capital City and Desecration of the Court

[953]After Farrukh Siyar had taken refuge in his harem, the Sayyid brothers had sent some of his men and had the Emperor forcibly pulled out of the imperial harem. *Iqbalnama*, p. 44.
After Farrukh Siyar was forcibly taken out from the imperial harem and incarcerated, several attempts were made to end his life. To begin with, he was blinded and sternly guarded in a dark and narrow room. The Emperor tried to persuade guards to take him to Sawai Raja Jai Singh. The Saiyyids, on knowing this, became more vigilant and decided to get rid of Farrukh Siyar completely. Consequently, twice he was given poison but it yielded no successful result. Ironically, the Emperor received his end by the method of killing he himself had invented, viz. *tasma-kashi* or thong-pulling. *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. I, p. 712.
[954] *Shahnama Munawwar Kalam*, pp. 28-44.
[955] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. I, p. 712.

During the period of Muhammad Shah, tussles over titles, ranks and posts became even more frequent. And some powerful nobles who could not have a desired share in power struggle, aspired to carve out their own independent territory. Nizam-ul-Mulk as the *Diwan* (Prime Minister) in the court of Muhammad Shah became dismayed by the court politics and left the court on the pretext of hunting. When the Emperor was informed of his intention, he ordered Mubraiz Khan, the governor of the Deccan to prevent Nizam-ul-Mulk from realizing his design. However, Mubraiz Khan was killed in his attempt to undertake his hold over the Deccan. The Emperor was compelled to grant the noble the governorship of the Deccan along with the title of Asaf Jah. He gave the vacant post of the *Diwan* to Itimad-ud-Daulah Qamaruddin Khan.[956]

As per the court protocol, no courtier could leave the court without waiting on the Emperor. Before Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah left the imperial court on a pretext, Maharaja Sujan Singh of Bikaner on realizing the deteriorating condition of the empire returned to his state. Besides, the economic condition of his state owing to good harvest had improved. When Muhammad Shah asked him to report to the imperial capital, he instead sent his men, Khawas Anandd and Mundra Jairoop on his behalf:

> दीली तषत मेहमद बैठौ तद सुजाणसिंघ जी बीकानेर पदहरिया । बरस दस चाकरी में रय्या पीछै जमाना हुवा अरु देस में दौलत वधी तारां वार १ दोय पातसाही अेथी बुलावण नु आया पण मेमद बेसता पातसाही सामान लेसी रही तीण सू पधारीया नहीं अरू कीतीक जमीरत सु षवास अणदराम वा मूंदड़ो जयरूप दिली चोकी गया ।[957]

Apart from the desertion of some of the prominent nobles from the imperial court, the Mughal court failed to maintain its diplomatic relations especially with some significant rulers. Diplomatic exchange was discontinued by the Mughal Emperor with the Persian Shah though he continued to send Mughal embassies to Mir Wais and his son, Husian who had seized Qandhar in spite of him raiding Multan. Besides when Nadir Shah had

[956] Rustam ‘Ali, Tarikh-i-Hindi, eds. H. M. Elliot, John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, vol. VIII, London, 1877, pp. 44-45.

[957] दयालदास सिंढायच कृत, बीकानेर री ख्यात, महाराजा सुजानसिंह से महाराजा रतनसिंह (ई॰1700 -1851 ई॰), डॉ. हुकुमसिंह भाटी, संपादक, राजस्थानी शोध संस्थान, जोधपुर, २००५, पृ॰ २८।

already informed Muhammad Shah about his intended invasion of Qandhar and appealed the Mughal Emperor not to give refuge to the Afghan migrants in Kabul, Muhammad Shah paid no heed to his request.[958] The Shah dispatched diplomatic missions to Hindustan before he invaded the territory. He sent a Persian ambassador at the Mughal court and as per the instruction of Nadir Shah the envoy was not to prolong his stay for more than forty days at the court of the host ruler. But the Persian emissary was detained for more than a year.[959] The reason the Persian ambassador was not given a permission to leave the Mughal capital city was that it was decided at the Mughal court to hold back till the Kandahar siege.[960] After the conquest of Qandahar, Nadir Shah had sent an ambassador, Ali Mardan Khan, to the Mughal imperial court. The diplomatic mission yielded no significant outcome. Another emissary, Muhammad Khan Turkoman[961] never arrived back to Nadir Shah, sparking the anger of the Persian Shah.[962] Anand D Mukhis, a contemporary writer, calls this failure of negotiation between the two rulers as 'the apparent motive' for Nadir Shah's resolution to invade Hindustan.[963]

There is no unanimous opinion among historians on whether Nadir Shah invaded Hindustan on the invitations of the *Wazir*, Saadat Khan and Nizam-ul-Mulk[964] or it was

[958] R. S. Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India: A Systematic Study Including Source Material*, vol. 3, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1999, p. 726.
[959] Masudul Hasan, *History of Islam*, vol. II, Adam Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2009, p. 446.
[960] Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, vol. I, Ist pub. 2005 by Kegan Paul Ltd., Routledge, New York, 2013, p. 339.
[961] Anand D Mukhlis gives the name of the Persian diplomat as Muhammad Khan Turkoman while in the *Bayan-i-Waki*, the account written by Khwaja Abdul Karim Khan, the name of the ambassador mentioned is Muhammad Khan Afshar.
[962] Khwaja Abdul Karim Khan, Bayan-i-Waki, eds. H. M. Elliot, John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, vol. VIII, London, 1877, p. 126.
[963] Anand D Mukhlis, Tazkira, eds. H. M. Elliot, John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, vol. VIII, London, 1877, pp. 76-77.
[964] Saadat Khan enticed Nadir Shah to come to the imperial city to collect 20 *crores* from there. While Nizam-ul-Mulk who had difficult times in the Deccan on account of the Maratha raids, sought to divert the Maratha energy by suggesting the *Peshwa* the possibility of the Maratha expansion in Northern India, a suggestion welcomed by Baji Rao I. Baji Rao I succeeded his father Balaji Vishwanath in 1720 as the *Peshwa*. He followed the expansionist policy. He extended his control over Malwa and Gujarat. In 1737 he defeated the Nizam and forced him to pay arrears of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. Afterwards, he attacked Delhi and made Muhammad Shah to sign the Treaty of Sironj through which the Marathas acquired complete sovereignty over Malwa. Salma Ahmed Farooqui, *Comprehensive History of Medieval India: From Twelfth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2011, p. 330. Also see, S. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire, (1739-1754)*, vol. I, Orient Longman, London, 1964, pp. 135-137.
When Nizam-ul-Mulk was called to the court the second time by Muhammad Shah, he was ill-treated and ridiculed by the other courtiers especially by Khan-i-Dauran and his men who commented on him saying,

Khan-i-Dauran who mishandled the situation and showed gross negligence in making preparations to stem the tide of the Persian aggression. The anonymous writer of the *Risala-i-Muhammad shah-wa khan-i-Dauran* and the author of the *Jauhar-i-Samsam*, openly accuse the two leading Mughal nobles of treasonable attempts to invite Nadir Shah.[965] Whatever be the case, the possibility of Persian invasion was never taken seriously by Muhammad Shah and when finally Nadir Shah, invaded Hindustan, then also the merry monarch was too busy to take the messenger's warning seriously and continued drinking wine, saying "*Hanooz Dilli Door Ast*". By the time he really woke up to the seriousness of the situation it was too late. Nadir Shah and his men were already at the threshold of the seventh city of Delhi. Muhammad Shah had ordered his *Wazir* and *Nizam-ul-Mulk* to go on the expedition against Nadir Shah, but both excused themselves.[966] However later he did join the army but the Mughal army was no match for those of the Persian army. And at this point of juncture too, the nobles continued to negotiate with the Emperor over the grant of titles and ranks. During the course of the Battle of Karnal, Amir-ul-umara Samsam-ud-daula lost his life. The

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'*Obferve how the Deccan Monkey dances*'. James Fraser, *The History of Nadir Shah Formerly called Thamas Kuli Khan, The Prefent Emperor of PERSIA*, Mohan Publications, Delhi, first reprinted in India 1973, p. 68.

James Fraser is of the opinion that it was this highly insulting remark that incited Nizam ul Mulk to seek his revenge at the cost of the prestige of the empire. 'This Ufage having wrought him up to the higheft Pitch of Refentment, he was refolved to revenge himfelf by diftreffing the Empire, and deftroying Khandoran and his Creatures.' Ibid., p. 68.

Therefore he with Saadat Khan invited Nadir Shah to invade the Mughal territory '*which was the principal Motive that encouraged him to undertake that Expedition…*' Ibid., p. 70.

[965] Nagendra Kr. Singh, *Encyclopaedic Historiography of the Muslim World*, Global Vision Publishing House, New Delhi, 2004, p.778.

[966] James Fraser, *The History of Nadir Shah, formerly called Thamas Kuli Khan*, the present emperor of Persia. To which is prefix'd a short history of the Moghol emperors. At the end is inserted, a catalogue of about two hundred manuscripts in the Persia and other Oriental languages, collected in the East, pub. by W. Strahan, 1742, p. 146.

Emperor appointed Nizam-ul-Mulk, as the *Mir Bakshi*.[967] This antagonized Saadat Khan Bahadur Jang Burhan-ul-Mulk who had been coveting to acquire the said office.[968]

After the Battle of Karnal, Nadir Shah addressed Muhammad Shah in a manner in which a superior does to his sub-ordinate. When he met the Mughal Emperor after the battle, he spoke to him in the following manner:

> It is ftrange that you fhould be fo unconcerned and regardlefs of your own Affairs, that notwithftanding I wrote you feveral Letters, fent an Ambaffador, and teftified a Friendfip for you, your minifters fould not think proper to fend me a fatisfactory Anfwer ; and by Reafon of your Want of Command and Defcipline over your own People, one of my Ambaffadors, contrary to all Laws, has been killed in your Dominions.
>
> Even when I entered your Empire, you feemed under no Concern for your Affairs, nor fo much as fent to afk who I was, or what was my Defign. When I advanced as far as Lahor, none of your People came with a Meffage or Salutation, nay not with an Anfwer to my Salutation to you: Afterwards, when your Omras were awaked out of their Lethargy and Indolence, they prevented all Means of Reconciliation; and coming tumultuoufly with an Intent to ftop my farther Progrefs, they brought themfelves into one general Snare, without having the Fore-fight to leave any behind, who upon an Emergency could make Head, and retrieve their Affairs...I fhall not take from you, only as your Indolence and Pride have obliged me to march fo far, and that I have been put to an extraordinary Expence, and my Men, on account of the long Marches, are much fatigued, and in want of Neceffaries; I must go to *Dehli*, and there continue fome Days, until the Army is refrefhed, and the *Peifhcufh*, that *Nizam ul Muluck* has

[967] Before Muhammad Shah promoted Nizam-ul Mulk to *Mir Bakhshi*, Sa'adat Khan and Nizam-ul Mulk agreed on a war indemnity of five million rupees with no territorial acquisitions. But after the promotion, the envied *Wazir* advised Nadir Shah to march to Shahjahanbad where he could get twenty million rupees and jewellery. Nadir Shah took Nizam-ul Mulk and Muhammad Shah into custody and they were made to escort the Persians to the imperial capital city of the Mughals. When threatened with corporal punishment if the *Wazir* and the *Mir Bakshi* did not reveal the treasures, the two agreed to commit suicide; Sa'adat Khan consumed poison, but Nizam-ul Mulk did not and escorted Nadir Shah and his army to the city. *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan, The Annals of Mewar*, ed. C. H. Payne, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1960, pp. 148-9.

[968] Muhammad Muhsin Sadiki, Jauhar-i-Samsam, ed. H. M. Elliot, John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, vol. VIII, London, 1877, p. 75.

agreed to, is made good to me; after that I fhall leave you to look after your own Affairs.[969]

Before entering Shahjahanabad, Nadir Shah had some prominent nobles of Muhammad Shah viz. Tahmasp Khan Jalair, Wakilu-s Saltanat, Barhanu-l Mulk Bahadur, and Azimu-llah Khan Bahadur, sent to the Mughal capital to make arrangements for his reception.[970] On entering the fort at Shajahanabad, Nadir Shah determined the place within the fort for the accommodation of Muhammad Shah and his contingent while it is said he settled on the *Diwan-i-khas* or the *Hayat Bakhsh* Garden. And like 'a prisoner', the food for the Mughal Emperor was delivered from Nadir's Shah's table.[971] The Persian Shah had the daughter of Murad Baksh, the third son of Shah Jahan, married to his son, Nasir Mirza with an elaborate ceremony just as the Emperors and nobles of the Mughal royal household used to marry the daughters of the subjugated local rajas and zamindars. Muhammad Shah offered Nasir Mirza a *khilat*, a pearl necklace, *jigah*, dagger adorned with pearls and an elephant with gold trappings.[972] Muhammad Shah presented the princess jewels worth 50,000 rupees and also cash amounting to 50,000 rupees. A few days later Nadir Shah sent her jewels of five *lakh* rupees[973] in order to emphasize his status vis-a-vis that of Muhammad Shah's, producing an escalating contest for honour and prestige wherein the value of the gift must exceed the value of the earlier one.[974]

Before leaving Delhi, Nadir Shah honoured Muhammad Shah with gifts of seven Iraqi horses, trays full of precious stones and gems and cloths. He conferred *khilats* on the Emperor's Ministers. He also advised the Mughal Emperor on the matters concerning statecraft.[975] The grant of gifts at the imperial *darbar* of the Mughals by the Persian Shah before he marched back to Persia was not just a mere event. Nadir Shah through the exercise of important rituals of kingship at Muhammad Shah's court amidst all the

[969] James Fraser, *The history of Nadir Shah, formerly called Thamas Kuli Khan, the present emperor of Persia*, pub. by W. Strahan, 1742, pp. 164-166.
[970] Anand D Mukhlis, p. 87.
[971] Tarikh-i-Hindi, p. 64.
[972] Anand D Mukhlis, pp. 89-90.
[973] James Fraser, *The history of Nadir Shah* , p. 197.
[974] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift, The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, London and New York, p. xi.
[975] Tarikh-i-Hindi, p. 65.

courtiers (high and low) of the latter signaled his power. He gave an audience at the Mughal *durbar* where the Mughal Emperor was one of his courtiers. Earlier we observe that on the eve of the marriage between the son of Nadir Shah and the daughter of Muhammad Shah, Nadir Shah competed closely with the Mughal Emperor to accentuate his status distinctly by presenting more expensive gifts to the bride of his son. However in the *durbar*, the pecking order of the court, the conferment of gifts, and the advices—all established the Persian Shah as superior to the Mughal Emperor.

It is interesting to note that on one hand, the Persian invader had many high ranking Mughal nobles tortured and compelled to depart from the massive part of their property and thus collected colossal amount of wealth from the court of the Mughals. Even the innocent inhabitants of the imperial capital city were not spared. And yet, on the other hand, when holding *darbars*, on festive occasions, etc. he showered expensive gifts on the same individuals who were tormented before. This was so because giving is also a legitimate and recognized form of possessing.[976] Through the means of giving gifts in the court he converted economic capital into 'symbolic capital'[977] and created an asymmetrical relationship. He earned the recipient's indebtedness, obligation and gratitude and was able to possess legitimate and recognized form of prestige and power.

Even though Nadir Shah had abstained from looting the treasury inside the imperial palace (he was informed of immense wealth hidden inside the palace),[978] still the estimated amount he accumulated was so tremendous that for the next three years, the Mughal accountant as well as the expert accountants of India and Iran failed to calculate the exact amount.[979] Anand D Mukhlis who was an eyewitness to the invasion of Hindustan by Nadir Shah and ravages it caused to the imperial city, Shah Jahanabad, reported:

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[976] Pierre Bourdieu, Structures, Habitus, Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power, eds. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley and Sherry B. Ortner, *Culture/Power/History, A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, Princeton, 1993, p. 189.

[977] The concept of symbolic capital was coined by Pierre Bourdieu.

[978] The officials of Nadir Shah after assessing the treasures informed the Shah: 'if they attempted to calculate and estimate in detail the extent, and valuation of this incomparable treasure and limitless wealth of jewels, ornaments, pearls, gold, silver, clothes, household furnitures, and other effects and valuables, they would have to expend a life for it, and even then could not detail them out.' *The Iqbalnama*, p. 192.

[979] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*, Cambridge University Press, p. 260.

All the regal jewels and property and the contents of the treasury were seized by the Persian conqueror in the citadel. He thus became possessed of treasure to the amount of sixty *lacs* of rupees and several thousand *ashrafis*; plate of gold to the value of one *kror* of rupees, and the jewels, many of which were unrivalled in beauty by any in the world, were valued at about fifty *krors*. The Peacock throne alone, constructed at great pains in the reign of Shah Jahan, had cost one *kror* of rupees. Elephants, horses, and precious stuffs, whatever pleased the conqueror's eye, more indeed can be enumerated, became his spoil. In short, the accumulated wealth of 348 years changed masters in a moment.[980]

Along with the significant symbols of the Mughal kingship like the famed Peacock throne,[981] Nadir Shah also took away a celebrated diamond owned by the House of the Timurids. The Persian Shah granted the precious stone the title of *Koh-i-nur*. Once he reached Persia, the rumour had it that he had the 'Mountain of Light' cleaved into pieces.[982] The conferring of the title to the precious stone signified the hierarchy of authority and taking away the potent symbols of authority[983] such as the Peacock throne and the *Koh-i-nur* substantiated and intensified the Persian Shah's authority.

The nobles at the Mughal court too suffered a severe loss of wealth and honour. The property of Nawab Sahib Waziru-l Mamalik which was worth 30 *lakhs*[984] of rupees along with precious stones and gems and elephants were confiscated. Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah as well as Burhan-ul-Mulk met the similar fate. The latter had the property worth one

[980] Anand D Mukhlis, p. 89.
[981] *The Iqbalnama* records of another throne which was carried away along with the Peacock throne. It was called Panchan Samir and it was completely made of gold. *The Iqbalnama*, p. 192.
[982] Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, p. 340.
[983] Grahame Clark in his work regards thrones and precious stones as 'potent symbols of authority'. And when the thrones are embedded with precious stones, their potency magnifies. Therefore, the back of the throne of King Nebkheperura Tutankhamun, an ancient Egyptian pharaoh of the XVIII dynasty, was covered in sheet gold. The Bible says that King Solomon had a throne which was sheathed in ivory overlaid by gold and was mounted on a dais containing six steps. The throne of Sargon II of Assyria (722-705 B.C.) was encrusted in gold, ivory, carnelian and lapis lazuli. Clark, op. cit., p. 93.
[984] The *Iqbalnama* informs that the *Wazir* was compelled to give 37 *lakhs* of rupees. Several other prominent nobles were also forced to pay a huge amount. From the house of the deceased Muzaffar Khan about one *crore* of rupees was extracted while Hamid Khan had to give 13 *lakhs*. Hamid Khan's sister, Rahim-un-Nisa offered one *lakh*. Sarbuland Khan, Ali Asghar Khan and Ali Ahmad Khan (the *Darogah* of Arz Mukarrar) gave a few *lakhs*. The son of Raja Bakht Mall, Kunwar Jiwan Mall gave 11 *lakhs*; a similar amount was paid by Rai Nagar Mal, Rai Khushhal Chand who was the *Peshdasht* of the *Bakshi* and Rai Nunda, the Peshkar Tan. Rai Nunda, son of Bhog Chand offered a few *lakhs*. The *Diwan-i-Tan*, Sheikh Saadullah gave 4 *lakhs* of rupees. *The Iqbalnama*, p. 194.

crore which was taken away.[985] Nadir Shah demanded a sum of twenty *crore* of Rupees (exclusive of the jewels, gold plate set with precious stones and other fine goods, seized of the other *umara* or collected from the imperial treasury) from Nizam-ul-Mulk.[986] Nizam-ul-Mulk and Qamaruudin Khan, each gave a *peshkash* of one and a half *crore* Rupees, in jewels, treasure and goods.[987] Saadat Khan had agreed to give a *crore*, but could manage thirty *lakhs*, rest he promised to send from his *suba*. The 1st *Mir Tuzuk*[988], Tarbiyat Khan Mir Atish's property was looted by Nadir Shah's *Nasaqchis* or armed police.[989] There were other *umara*, mansabdars and rich inhabitants of the city who had contributed. They were pressed for their quotas of *peshkash* and several of them in order to save their credit and reputation, killed themselves.[990] And others were tortured and beaten up. The *mansabdars* were made to produce their elephants, camels, and horses before the Shah and were seized.[991] A French named Volton who became the trusted doctor of the Emperor, Muhammad Shah and also of the other Mughal nobles, on the event of the invasion by Nadir Shah wrote that the Persian Shah 'imprisoned Mohammad Shah [the Emperor], looted Delhi and massacred about 230, 000 people…'. He added that in such a situation of turmoil, he 'also managed to loot about ten to twenty *lakhs* of rupees' and also 'guarded with vigilance the house of Qamar-ud-din and his family, and prevented it from being attacked by Nadir Shah's men'. [992]

It is said that the citizens were not spared too from the avarice of the Persian invader. First and foremost an inventory of all the inhabitants of the city whether rich or poor, with their property was prepared. Next they had to report to the imperial *darbar* hall, waiting and standing for long hours so that the amount to be extracted from each citizen as per his livelihood could be fixed. After the list was prepared, the total amount to be collected was estimated to be two *crores* of rupees. However in the process of money extraction from the residents of the city, many families were devastated. There were

[985] Anand D Mukhlis, p. 89.
[986] James Fraser, pp. 192-3.
[987] Ibid., p.193.
[988] Chief Master of Ceremonies
[989] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 939.
[990] Fraser, op. cit., p. 199. Chuckl Keifhvir, the Bengal Wakil, on being ordered to send seven *crore* of rupees, murdered himself and his family, p. 200.
[991] Ibid., p.196.
[992] Jean-Marie & Rehana Lafont, *The French & Delhi, Agra, Aligarh and Sardhana*, India Research Press, New Delhi, 2010, p. 42.

people who out of helplessness and miseries, consumed poison while others stabbed themselves to death and thus, many chose to end their lives.[993] Ranga Pillai, an interpreter to the French East India Company, had recorded in his private diary the impact of Nadir Shah's invasion on the merchant class at Delhi. Many were ruined and reduced to poverty. Many women committed suicide. It was approximated that about 100,000 to 150,000 people died.[994] The whole city of Delhi was sacked and the loss of the lives, wealth, honour, pride of the inhabitants along with the Mughal nobles was so huge that the city could not forget for generations to come.[995]

Nadir Shah, as mentioned in the account of James Fraser, had carried away wealth amounting to 70 *crores*. Here is the list of the objects, both in cash and in kinds, which Nadir Shah had carried away with him: [996]

Particulars	Amount in Rupees
Precious jewels from the Mughal Emperor and nobles	25
Takht-i-taus (Peacock Throne), utensils and handles of weapons and nine other thrones encrusted with precious stones	9
Gold and silver rupee coins	25
Gold and Silver Plates, melted down and coined	5
Rich cloths and various other valuable stuffs	2
Household Furniture and other expensive items	3
War weapons, cannons, etc	1
Total	70

[993] Anand D Mukhlis, pp. 90-1.
[994] *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, p. 95.
[995] G. S. Chhabra, *Advanced Study in the History of Modern India (1707-1803)*, vol. I, Lotus Press, New Delhi, 1971, p. 10.
[996] Nadir Shah also took with him 300 masons and builders, 200 smiths, 200 carpenters, and 100 stone-cutters with the objective of building himself a city like Shajahanbad in Persia, to be called Nadir Abad, or City of Nadir. Ibid, pp. 220-221.

The wealth plundered from Hindustan by Nadir Shah was so enormous that he had remitted three years' revenue to the inhabitants of Persia after returning from his military expedition from there.[997] Many of his wars in Turan, Daghistan and Rum were also carried out from it as the wealth looted enabled him to maintain a large army to undertake further military expeditions.[998]

The Persian invasion paralyzed Muhammad Shah and his court. After the invasion, Muhammad Shah never went out of the imperial fort of Shahjahanabad barring for the purpose of pleasure trips or to spend his time in sports.[999] He had abandoned music at the imperial court.[1000] He would not let his son, Ahmad Shah to show himself in public in any way. Accordingly the prince was locked up by the order of his royal father. He could not go out for hunting, shooting, chaugan-playing and such activities.[1001] On one side the nobles were becoming more enthusiastic to grab more and more power from the Emperor while on the other side, the desperate Emperor, out of the feeling of deep insecurity, would hardly assign any military tasks, titles, ranks or rewards, etc. to royal princes, keeping them deprived of gaining direct experience on the battlefield and participating in the administration as we see in earlier times.[1002] Muhammad Shah was extremely

[997] The accumulated wealth of the imperial city was carried off to Persia in more than five hundred boxes, made from the wooden beds, planks, doors of gates from different places besides the boxes of the imperial workshops. The foreign and Hindustani carpets from the royal tapestry house were cut into pieces to make bags out of them. They were too used for the purpose of storing the collected wealth. The bags and boxes , filled with immense treasures of Hindustan was transported on horses, camels and elephants taken from the royal stable and also from those of the distinguished nobles. The anonymous writer of the *Iqbalnama* records that how the invasion had not only exceptionally profited the Persian Shah but also every single soldier in his military service enjoyed the fruits of the plunder: 'Each and every soldier of the Shah had filled his pockets, sleeves and skirts, with gold and silver, and these red and white things which looked like the spring roses from the paradise-like orchards, along with all sorts of clothes and other articles, were placed, on the back of camels and horses and were carried on by them as if they were bundles of hays and straws. *The Iqbalnama*, pp. 195-6.

[998] Jauhar-i-Samsam, p. 75.

[999] Ibid., p. 73.

[1000] Panna, the lead dancer of the royal court, after the suspension of music at the court by the Emperor, started organizing the *mehfils* for the nobles and her admirers. She was very proficient in singing *khayyal* and *raag*. Muhammad Shah had honoured her with several favours. Kamal Bai, an excellent singer and dancer at the court too suffered the similar fate. She often recited the *khayyals* of Nemat Khan Bin Nawaz who invented a variety of marvellous *khayyals* and was regarded as the master of all the musicians of the city in those times. *Muraqqa-e-Dehli*, pp. 75, 122, 124.

[1001] Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, eds. H. M. Elliot, John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period*, vol. VIII, Trubner & Co., London, 1877, p. 105.

[1002] The manuscript paintings, memoirs and court chronicles record events concerning the conferment of titles, ranks, *khilat*, special privileges, gifts and such rewards on royal princes on various occasions.

reluctant to send his son, Ahmad Shah on a military campaign against the ruler of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Durrani. And when finally he was pressed by some important nobles to appoint the prince to take charge of the battle against Durrani, Muhammad Shah called his son in the Audience hall, kissed him and gave a copy of the Quran but without having honoured him with any title, rank, etc. befitting his status as per the custom. He plainly entrusted him with the military duty.[1003] This was completely against the convention of the court. As per the norm, whenever the Emperor entrusted any military task to a royal prince he would honor him lavishly (more generously than a noble) in the royal durbar in the presence of all significant courtiers, reflecting the prince's status and that with the acceptance of the honour bestowed upon him, the prince was made obliged to accomplish the assigned task successfully. The nobles who were sent under the command of the prince were also awarded suitably as per their respective standing and the military assignments given to them. In 1642 before Shah Jahan had sent Dara Shikoh to Kandahar against the advance of the Shah of Persia on Kandahar, he had the prince duly honoured along with the men who were being sent with him on the military expedition to Kandahar.[1004] But with no rewards, no gifts and thus no honour bestowed upon Prince Ahmad Shah at the imperial court, he was placed under no obligation towards the empire, no reciprocity was enforced. Therefore, on their accession, the princes who spent their lives either as prisoners or in the harem without undertaking any military, political and administrative responsibilities were unable to discharge their royal duties proficiently. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi* sketches the disposition of Ahmad Shah as the Emperor of the Mughal empire:

> …all the period of youth till manhood had been spent in the *harem*, and he had absolutely no experience whatever of the affair of a kingdom, or of the cares of the government. Besides this, he was surrounded by all kinds of youthful pleasures, which every person, seeing the turn of his mind, was anxious to display before him to entice his fancy. As a natural consequence, he gave himself up entirely to pastime and sports, and bestowed no thought on the weighty affairs of the kingdom. To manage a country and wield a scepter is a matter full of

[1003] Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, p. 108.
[1004] Shyamaldas, *Vir Vinod*, vol. II, Part II, pp. 722-3.

> difficulty, and until an Emperor understands himself the good and bad tendency of every measure, he cannot be fit for a ruler. For this reason, Ahmad Shah was unable to govern the empire entrusted to him.[1005]

An Appraisal

The tradition of incarcerating or confining the royal princes, his sons and their families began with the reign of Aurangzeb. He even put Shah Jahan into confinement in the fort of Agra along with his daughter, Jahanara after seizing the power in his hands. The old Emperor was strictly prohibited to step out of the fort.[1006] His brothers and their sons were imprisoned and killed. He had no trust in his sons too.[1007] He incarcerated Muhammad Muazzam for about seven years on the ground of suspicion. He believed that during the time of the conquest of Golconda his son was conspiring against him with the Qutb Shahi ruler of Golconda, Abul Hassan. Based on the suspicion, the prince along with his two eldest sons Muizz-ud-din and Muhammad Azim were arrested.[1008]

After Jahandar Shah became the Emperor, he immediately ordered the Viceroy of Bengal to send Prince Farrukh Siyar, as the prisoner to the imperial court.[1009] Roshan Akhtar who later sat on the Mughal throne as Muhammad Shah was awarded the rank of 8,000 *zat* and 2,000 *sawar* during the reign of Bahadur Shah but after the accession of Jahandar Shah, he was confined to the harem at Shahjahanabad where he spent his precious years of princehood with his mother Qudsia Fakhr-un-nisa Begum.[1010] In order to merely fulfill the wish of his consort (Lal Kunwar), Yahya Khan, the author of the *Tazkirat-ul-muluk* informs that he also had two of his younger sons, viz. Izz-ud-Daula and Muzz-ud-Daula

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[1005] Ibid, p. 112.

[1006] Shah Jahan yearned to have a last view of his imperial capital city, Shah Jahanabad before he breathed his last. But Aurangzeb being very cautious never permitted his father to leave the fort. He 'feared lest his father's appearance to the people might immediately raise a party in his favour, and that if he placed himself at their head, as people are inconstant, he might find means to recover the throne'. Bernier, pp. 274-5.

[1007] Aurangzeb had silver chains especially made for his progeny. Manucci, vol I, p. 304.
Alamgir had also confined his infant grandson Nekusiyar, son of the rebel prince Muhammad Akbar, in the Agra fort, along with his two sisters, who were later married to the princes, Rafi-us-Shan and Jahan Shah, the sons of Bahadur Shah. Nekusiyar was later raised to the throne.

[1008] William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. I, p. 3.

[1009] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, p. 41.

[1010] Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign of Muhammad Shah, 1719-1748*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1977, p. 56.

incarcerated.[1011] The early phase of Farrukh Siyar's reign turned out to be a reign of terror, full of bloody executions, and mutilations. The son of the executed Emperor, Jahandar Shah, the son of the dead Azam Shah as well as the younger brother of Farrukh Siyar called Humayun Bakht were blinded.[1012] By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the condition of the *salatin* (the descendants of former Emperors, Emperors' brothers or the sons of the reigning Emperor) became extremely pitiable.[1013]

For the first time in the history of the Mughals, nobles became so powerful that they ended the reign of one Mughal Emperor and selected a Mughal prince to succeed him. Thus, the two Sayyid brothers came to be known as the King Makers. Before them, it used to be a war of succession among the royal princes. Now the princes rotted in prisons, having no opportunity of learning and sharpening their military and administrative skills, whereas the nobles were engaged in acquiring more and more power for themselves. No more imperial favour was a mark of distinction. In fact it became a source that sowed the seeds of animosity and alienation. The Emperor secretively promised the grant of titles, ranks and privileges in lieu of forming coalition with him in order to eliminate a certain noble. While the prominent nobles either engaged themselves in the similar enterprise against or in the support of the Emperor or form an alliance with other nobles and create a faction so as to vanquish the other factions.

In the beginning of the reign of Farrukh Siyar, some of the envious nobles forged a letter from Nawab Zeb-un-Nisa Begam, the daughter of Aurangzeb and the *Padshah Begam* of the harem of Farrukh Siyar, commanding the execution of the nobles, viz. Sadullah Khan, Hidayat Kesh Khan Jadid-ul-Islam and Saidi Qasim Kotwal of Delhi. Sadullah Khan, earlier employed in the service of previous Emperors, was a distinguished, honest and

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[1011] Jahandar Namah, loc.cit.

[1012] *The Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. I, p. 63.

[1013] In an official paper, Major George Cunningham highlights the miserable condition of the *salatin* who were spending their lives in the *salatin's* quarter:

The *salatin* quarter consists of an immense high wall so that nothing can overlook it. Within this are numerous mat huts in which these wretched objects live. When the gates were opened there was a rush of miserable, half-naked, starved beings who surrounded us. Some men apparently eighty years old almost in a state of nature, who from the earliest infancy had been shut up, others young men, some sons of Kings whose mothers either had died or not been in favour…others young children who had the space within these walls to look forward to as their world… . The utmost allowed was a few blankets during the cold weather, distributed as if by the King, but in fact a private charity of Seton's. Percival Spear, Twilight of the Mughuls, Studies in Late Mughul Delhi, *The Delhi Omnibus*, p. 62.

capable noble and held important offices. Farrukh Siyar had him imprisoned after he was enthroned. After a few days he was released on the order of the *Padshah Begam*. However soon the very same day of the release, he along with the two other mentioned nobles were strangulated to death through the means of the forged letter. As per one belief, the Sayyid brothers were the architects of the conspiracy.[1014]

By the reign of Muhammad Shah, through the study of the case of the Sayyids and Ajit Singh of Marwar against Farrukh Siyar and Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur Bhandari Raghunath of Jodhpur, we observe that the court intrigues had already intensified to a greater extent. The Emperor lured Bakht Singh, one of the sons of Ajit Singh into committing parricide by promising imperial favour i.e., the title of *Rajadhiraja* and the State of Nagaur.[1015] Before Ajit Singh was eliminated, Muhammad Shah had already made several unsuccessful attempts to get rid of him. In one of the letters of the Rajput ruler, in which he recounted the death of Farrukh Siyar, narrated the attempts made by the Emperor to get him killed. When Ajit Singh met the Emperor for the first time, the latter decided to eliminate him. Accordingly on his second meeting with the Emperor, there were some men kept hidden inside the chamber where the meeting took place. The Emperor's third attempt aimed at getting him killed during the hunt while in the fourth endeavour, Farrukh Siyar had gun-powder spread in a garden and sent sharp shooters to kill Ajit Singh.[1016]

After Farrukh Siyar was deposed and Rafi-ud-Darjat was seated on the throne, Ajit Singh was honoured with several grand imperial favours, the details of which are available in the mentioned letter. He received:

> सीरपाव । घोडो पलांणा जडाव रो । मोती कांन रा भारी कीमत रा पातसाहजी हाथा सु कांनां मै घाली-या । सीरपेच जडाउ पातसाहजी हाथा सुं बांधीयो । तरवार जडाऊ । हाथी । हथणी-आगै कीणी अमीर नु पातसाहां दीया नहीं साहजाहां रा दसतुर माफक म्हांनु दीया ।

[1014] *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. II, p. 646.
[1015] Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Bisheshwar Nath Reu, *Glories of Marwar and the Glorious Rathors*, Jodhpur Archaeological Department, Jodhpur, 1943, p. 123.
[1016] Ibid., p. 117.

तुमनतोग बड़ो मरातब छै साहजादां रै हुवै और कीणी अमीररै आज तक न हुवो सु म्हांनु दीयो ।[1017]

(*Saropa*, a horse with embedded saddle, extremely expensive pearl earrings which the Emperor himself put in our ears, embedded *sarpech* which the Emperor himself tied, an embedded sword, elephants (one male and one female), no *amir* had received this honour as it is reserved only for the royal princes but it was granted to us. *Tumontogh*, a great rank, not bestowed on any noble but only princes, was given to us.)

The award of such rare privileges accorded to Ajit Singh by the Emperor who was placed on the throne by the Sayyids was clearly one of the many attempts of these two powerful nobles to retain the loyalty of the Rajput ruler of Marwar and to form a very dominant faction at the court. In fact, they attempted not only to appease Ajit Singh of Marwar but the whole of the Rajput community. The very first imperial order issued on the eve of the accession of Rafi-ud-Darjat was the removal of *jizya*.[1018] Even before this, the Sayyids attempted to forge cordial relations with the Rajput rajas. Farrukh Siyar, on the recommendation of the Nawab Amir-ul-Umara Hussain Ali Khan, gave the title of 'Mirza Raja Sawai' to Maharaja Jai Singh, the ruler of Jaipur.[1019] Pancholi Jag Jiwan Das, the representative of Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh at the imperial court in *arzdasht* written on 16 June 1713 notifies the Maharaja that the Nawab would make an effort to award the Maharaja with the title of 'Sawai' for him.[1020] In another *arzdasht*, dated 25 June 1713, the Maharaja was informed that he was awarded the title of 'Sawai' and that an elephant would be sent to him.[1021] The powerful nobles were forging alliances not only against another powerful faction at the court but even against the Emperor. Earlier it was the Emperor who utilized the award of titles and ranks to retain the loyalty of the men at the imperial service. Now the titles and ranks and imperial favours continued to be granted but these became more a useful tool in the hands of some powerful nobles as we

[1017] Reu, op. cit., p. 114.
[1018] *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan, the Annals of Mewar*, p. 324.
[1019] Arzdasht, 19th June, 1713, Writer: Pancholi Jag Jiwan Das, Addressee: Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh. *A Descriptive List of the Vakil Reports Addressed to the rulers of Jaipur*, (Rajasthani), p. 45.
[1020] Ibid., p. 45.
[1021] Ibid., p. 46.

get to see in the case of the Sayyids when the Emperor was too weak to exert any authority. On the other hand, Emperors like Muhammad Shah who tried to exercise regal power too used imperial favours as a bait to entice one section of the nobles so as to get rid of another who were becoming or had become too powerful like the Sayyid brothers. The court intrigues and secret ploys by the Emperor and the nobles (both) led to the elimination of capable nobles who could have otherwise contributed in the proper functioning of the empire. It also resulted in the rapid successions, affecting the stability and prestige of the royalty and nobility.[1022]

In 1781 Muhammad Shah had given the *tika* to Abhay Singh who had coaxed his brother, Bakht Singh to kill their father. The Emperor generously rewarded Abhay Singh with many imperial favours at the court. He tied a *torah* on the forehead of the new ruler of Marwar with his own hands and also girded him with a sword as well as a gem-studded dagger. He gave him *chaoris*, *naubat, naqqaras* and other such expensive gifts.[1023]

It is often maintained that the later Mughal Emperors indulged excessively in hedonism and therefore, paid no attention to the administration. It is to be noted that their great predecessors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan too indulged themselves in debauchery and revelry. However, the pursuit of such pleasures was not devoid of political motive. The

[1022] As a result of the constant court intrigues of the Saiyyids and disregard for the royal conventions, it seems they had hurt the common people's sentiments. There was a general riot on the day the dead body of Farrukh Siyar was being carried to the tomb of Humayun. Thousands of people, especially the *faqirs* and market people gathered around the bier and in rage, threw stones at the men of the Saiyyid brothers and abused them. Funeral prayers were recited at the Emperor's tomb for three consecutive days by them. It was said:
You saw what they did to the mighty King
They committed a hundred violences on him,
When I sought the date from Wisdom, she answered:
Sadat bawai nimak-hadi kardand (the Saiyids behaved disloyally to him).
However, it was also said:
They did what was right with the sick King,
They did all the physician should do,
One wise as Hippocrates wrote the prescription of the date,
Sadat dawash ancheh bayad kardand (the Saiyids gave him the right treatment)
The authors of the *Maathir-ul-Umara* blame the Emperor himself for his downfall because the Emperor 'should not have conferred on the Saiyids the great office of *Vazir* to which the Saiyids of Barah had no claim. For from the time of Akbar up to that of Aurangzeb—which represents the beginning and end of the regulations for the sovereignty of India—though the Saiyids of Barah were promoted to high offices, yet they did not even receive the low ranks of Divans of provinces or of managers for the King's sons'. *The Maathir-ul-Umara*, vol. I, pp. 712-3.

[1023] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or, the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, vol. II, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1832, rep. 1957, p. 75.

fact that they could have sexual rendezvous with the wives of their nobles (irrespective of the latter's approval) reveals the calculated measure adopted by the Emperor to demonstrate his power over his men. Whereas in the later Mughal period, between the wives of the Emperor and the nobles erupted amorous relationships.[1024] Javed Khan, the head eunuch and the superintendent of Muhammad Shah's harem, was enamoured by one of the consorts of the Emperor, Udham Bai. After the death of Muhammad Shah, the two of them together held the reins of the empire while Ahmad Shah 'had nothing left but the empty title'. Javed Khan, 'contrary to the custom of all harems, where no male domestics are allowed at night', spent his nights in the imperial harem. His interactions in the daytime used to be with low ranking people like *khansamans*. The nobles were sidelined.[1025]

The association of royalty with low ranking people and their promotion to high ranks without proving their competence also became rampant in the later Mughal period. The successful predecessors of the later Mughal Emperors had emphasized remarkably on the observation of proper protocols and code of conduct. Akbar believed that a ruler was not to be 'familiar in mirth and amusement with his courtiers' and that 'The words of kings resemble pearls. They are not fit pendants to every ear'.[1026] His court was an assembly of the elect. Bahadur Shah through his policy of pleasing all, promoted one and all to high ranks, making no distinction between high and low. Thus the degrading remark of the

[1024] In the glorious phase of the empire, there were instances of sensual relationship between the women of the royal household and that of the nobles, but in such matters, the male partner was swiftly eliminated. Jahanara Begum though like any other ladies of the Mughal harem was guarded by a number of women and eunuchs, yet in her apartments she used to manage meeting a man she liked. When Shahjahan was notified about it, he went to meet her at an unanticipated time. The completely baffled Jahanara hurriedly hid the man in a large pot used for the purpose of bathing. The composed Shahjahan had a light discussion with her daughter but before he left, he ordered the eunuchs to boil the water of the pot so that his daughter could bathe as 'the state of her skin indicated a neglect of her customary ablutions.' Shahjahan stayed there till the time he was convinced of the death of the man. Bernier, op. cit., pp. 12-13.
On yet another occasion when Jahanara was smitten by another man named Nazar Khan, he too received a similar treatment. The man was an eminent figure at the imperial court. Shaista Khan, Aurengzeb's uncle, was highly impressed by him and even suggested him as a suitor for Jahanara but Aurangzeb declined the offer and was apprehensive of their secret meetings. And thus one day he, in the garb of honouring Nazer Khan with a distinguished favour, he offered him the poisoned betel in the court. The court protocol demanded that the beneficiary of such an honour had to masticate the betel in the presence of the Emperor. Following the court protocol, the man chewed the betel before the Emperor little he knew that his death was approaching fast. He died on his way to home. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
[1025] Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, pp. 113-114.
[1026] *The Ain*, vol. III, p. 451-2.

Prince of Persia about the high Mughal rank (as mentioned earlier) was not very astonishing; it truly highlights the loss of esteem which the Mughal titles and ranks denoted earlier. Consequently the zeal for rendering excellent service so as to advance one's growth in the court circle diminished. The favourite consort of Jahandar Shah, Lal Kunwar was a mere dancer. Her relatives, lacking political acumen and regard for conventions were rewarded with high imperial favours, creating huge dissatisfaction among the proficient nobles and thus resulting into frequent tussles. Shah Muhammad Shah's third wife and the mother of Ahmad Shah was initially a dancing girl.[1027] In the beginning of the Emperor's reign, he married and included her in his harem. However soon the Emperor's interest in her waned and she was neglected. She was even prohibited from meeting her son. Later, after her son succeeded the Mughal throne, she was elevated to a very high dignity and she along with his beloved, took control of the administration.[1028]

From the cultural perspective, the rise of musicians, dancers and singers surely gave an impetus to the cultural growth of the city. But at the same time their ascension to high ranks at the imperial court lowered the prestige of the royalty. Musicians, dancers and singers had been a very significant aspect of the Mughal court. They had been a very significant aspect of the Mughal court especially from the reign of Akbar. Listening to music was a part of the Emperor's daily routine[1029] and also a part of important festivities

[1027] The court of Muhammad Shah was adorned with many singers and dancers. Chak-Mak Dahni in the prime of her youth captivated the Emperor who awarded her the title of *Chak-Mak*. *Muraqqa-i-Dehli*, p. 115.
Mature but eloquent artists also graced the imperial court. A middle-aged female singer by the name of Chamani provided occasional company to the Emperor. Ibid., p. 108.
[1028] Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, pp. 113-114.
Commenting on too much power concentrated in the hands of Javed Khan, the *Mir Bakshi*, Sa'adat Khan remarked: "There is no Emperor here. Why should we go to the *darbar* of a eunuch, to be insulted, and have our dignity lessened? To whom shall I state my case that I may be heard? It is better to give up such service." Disgusted by this turn of events, Sa'adat Khan first became negligent in attending the royal *darbar* and then finally after disbanding his army and selling all his valuables, he went to the Emperor, seeking permission to go to Mecca for performing haj. Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, pp. 120-121.
[1029] Abul Fazl records that every day 'a watch before daybreak' Akbar listened to songs and music. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 164.
The period of Akbar also marked the playing of music at its designated spot, *naqqarkhana*. Abul Fazl mentions a list of eight musical instruments used in the *naqqarakhana* which included the *Kuwarga*, *naqara*, *duhul*, *Karna*, *surna*, *nafir*, *sing*, and *sanj* or cymbal. Earlier the band played in the evening time, and then before the crack of dawn but later it was played at midnight and the daybreak. The musicians blew the *surna* just before and after sunrise. Then the kuwarga was beaten after a while, followed by blowing of

and celebrations at the court.[1030] Akbar's court historian, Abul Fazl mentions a list of 36 musicians at the court of his master and Miyan Tansen of Gwalior tops the list. Tansen, the renowned musician was sent to the court of Akbar by Raja Ram Chand Baghela who was the Raja of Bhath (or Bhattah). Akbar asked the Raja to send Tansen at his court. The Raja had to grant what Akbar demanded from him and sent his favourite musician along with many gifts to the imperial capital.[1031] Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa whose singers and dancing women, especially the gorgeous Rupmati, were famous throughout Hindustan, after the conquest of Malwa by the Mughal force and his submission to Akbar became one of the renowned singers at the Mughal court. Abul Fazl calls him 'a singer without rival.'[1032] The rationale behind citing instances of how from the reign of Akbar, the Mughal court was becoming a centre of prominent singers and musicians accumulated from the various courts of regional potentates and that how generously they were rewarded for their performance by their new patron is that Akbar through his patronage to music and 'musicians of all nations'[1033] endeavoured to demonstrate 'his new-found autonomy and military prowess'.[1034]

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the *karna*, and *nafir*. Thereafter, there was a small break. Then they blew *surnas*. One hour later the *naqaras* would begin, and the musicians gave seven performances. Then there was the reading of sentences and poems for about an hour. It was concluded by the performance of the *surna* players. In the late evenings, before Akbar a singer holding a candle in his hand would sing melodious tunes. Ibid., pp. 51-4.
Gradually music was played in the *diwan-i-am* as well. Tavernier informs us that it was here in the *diwan-i-am* that the music was played even when the vital state businesses were being carried out but the melodious and soft music hardly disturbed the court proceedings. Also during festivities there was an arrangement of a special tent in the *diwan-i-am* where the nobles sang and danced. Tavernier, vol. I, pp. 81, 306.

[1030] Abul Fazl gives a list of a legion of musicians at the court of Akbar, belonging to different ethnicities (Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, Hindus, etc.). They were proficient in playing different musical instruments like Bir Mandal Khan of Gwalior played on the *sarmandal*, Shihab Khan of Gwalior again and Purbin Khan performed on the *bin* while Usta Dost from Mashhad played flute (*nay*). Shaykh Dawan Dhari was an expert on playing *karna*, Mir Sayyid Ali of Mashhad on the *ghichak*, Tash Beg of Qipchaq, on the *qubuz*, Sultan Hashim, Usta Muhammad Amin and Usta Muhammad Husayn on the *tambura* and Usta Shah Muhammad played the *surna*. Ibid., vol. I, pp. 681-2.

[1031] Ibid., vol. I, p. 445. Tansen remained at the Mughal court for the rest of his life and many of his compositions are dedicated to Akbar. His great fame can be further elucidated by the fact that lying on his deathbed, Shaikh Salim Chishti, summoned Tansen (after obtaining permission from the Emperor) to listen to this great musician. Ibid., p. 71.
On 26 April, 1589, Tansen had died. Akbar declared his death as the extirpation of melody and as a mark of tribute, directed every musician and singer of his court to chaperone Tansen's dead body to the grave, playing melodies as on the occasion of a marriage. A.K, vol. III, p.816.
His son, Tantarang Khan too was a singer at Akbar's court. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 681.

[1032] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 473, 681.

[1033] Ibid., p.164.

[1034] John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, op. cit., p. 16.

His successors too had renowned musicians and singers who were suitably rewarded for their skilled performances. Ustad Muhammad Nayi who was a flute-player in Jahangir's time and praised by the Emperor in his memoirs, regarding him as 'unequalled in his craft', was sent to the court by his son, Prince Khurd on his demand. The very first time when he heard some of his pieces (*majlis-saz*) and a tune composed by him for an ode (*ghazal*) dedicated to the Emperor, Jahangir gifted him an elephant with a howdah and permitted him to mount it before him and ride, scattering rupees about him and also had him weighed against expensive items, the total value of which amounted to 6,300 rupees.[1035] At the court of Shah Jahan some of the renowned singers like Jagnath received the title of Kabrai and Lal Khan who was the son-in-law of Bilas, son of Tansen, got the title of Gunsamundar (ocean of excellence). Jagnath and another singer, Dirang Khan were weighed in silver, and each received the amount of 4,500 rupees.[1036] Besides the Mughal Emperors were themselves proficient in playing musical instruments. Akbar was excellent in performing, especially on the *naqara*. He had composed more than one hundred musical performances such as *Jalalshahi*, *Mahamir karkat*, and the *Naurozi*. The Mughal nobles too employed singers and musicians at their respective courts. The *Maasir-i-Rahimi* mentions the names of the singers in the service of the Khan-i-Khanan.

However as Aurangzeb did away with a lot of rituals and ceremonials of the court, musicians were banned too to play at the imperial *durbar*. Saqi Mustaid Khan, the author of the *Maasir-ul-Alamgiri*,[1037] gives two reasons for it: first, the Emperor had no liking for pleasure in general, and the second factor attributing to it was the fact that Aurangzeb was highly dedicated to his kingly duties and therefore, he was left with no time for celebrations and entertainment.[1038] Banning of the music from the imperial court surely

[1035] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p. 376.
[1036] *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p.682.
[1037] *Maasir-ul-Alamgiri*, op. cit., p. 45.
[1038] Blochmann writes that Aurangzeb removed the singers and musicians from his court because making and listening to music is *haraam* (forbidden) in Islam. While Saqi Mustaid Khan, the official historian of Aurangzeb, informs that it was music which was forbidden from the court and not the musicians. *The Ain*, vol. I, p. 682.
He commanded that the chief musicians, Khush-hal Khan, Bisd Khan, Ras-bin, and others 'might come to the Court, but must not make music.' *Maasir-ul-Alamgiri*, p. 45.
When Bisd Khan died, his son, Bhupat was given robes as a way to express the Emperor's condolences to the family of the departed. Ibid., p. 68.

lessened the prestige of the court because earlier the eminent musicians, singers and dancers from various parts of Hindustan adorned the Mughal court; now they were compelled to adorn the courts of the lesser rulers. Exclusive privileges were meant to be reserved for royalty and in the case of the Mughals listening to the most eminent musicians and singers of Hindustan was a rare privilege which they enjoyed. The shunning of music from the imperial court of Aurangzeb meant the shunning of this exclusive privilege his predecessors had and thus losing the control over this source of entertainment (music).

After Aurangzeb, music again became an integral part of the imperial court, though the finest, the unparalleled musicians or singers were not found within the confines of the court of the Mughals alone. Music permeated deeply every walk of life, every place of the imperial city, the court, the mansions of the nobles, the *khanqahs* of the *sufis*, residences of the singers, musicians and dancers, the streets and common places. The court of the later Mughals attracted a multitude of poets, musicians, singers and dancers but now along with them, their relatives and friends too graced the imperial court. Earlier the most skilled of them from far and wide were employed to increase the prestige of the court, now even an ordinary performer joined the imperial court to increase their own prestige. Lal Kunwar, an ordinary dancer became the chief queen of Jahandar Shah and as we have mentioned earlier how her incompetent kinsmen and companions were granted high ranks and that their frequent insolence for the court protocols and traditions only harmed the authority of the empire. By the reign of Muhammad Shah music became the most popular form of entertainment for the royalty, nobility and also for the ordinary people. The establishments of nobles became a hub of talented poets, singers and dancers. Festivity and revellery continued in the city even after the invasion of Nadir Shah, though Muhammad Shah observed self-restraint.[1039] The nobles were dedicated to holding

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Besides, *naubat* (the band) continued playing tunes as before. Ibid., p. 52.
For the entertainment of the royal ladies, the female dancers and singers were retained at the harem. Each of them had their own cluster of musicians and they could not sing or dance before the other ladies of the royal household and had to perform strictly before their master. Only when it was an occasion of some great festivity they were permitted to showcase their talent before a huge audience. The royal ladies awarded ranks and titles to them. Manucci provides with a list of the names of superintendants of the dancers and singers. Manucci, vol. II, pp. 312-4.

[1039] *Muraqqa-e-Dehli,* pp. 40-41.

mehfils of music. Azam Khan, one of the significant nobles at the Emperor's court and the nephew of Khan-e-Jahan Bahadur Alamgiri who was the foster brother and the *Mir Bakshi* of Muhammad Shah, was popular for organizing such *mehfils*. He himself was extremely proficient in music.[1040] These *mehfils* had their charm not only for music, *naqqals* and *qawwals* but also for alluring young lads or catamites, beautiful girls, *malzadis* (promiscuous women), pimps and drug peddlers. Even the prominent nobles like the *Wazir-ul-Mumalik*, Sadiq Quli Khan could not help but fervently attend those.[1041]

Another aspect the imperial court had to witness was the loss of *peshkash*. The custom of sending *peshkash* by the subordinated potentates, zamindars and governors as a token of the acceptance of the Mughal overlordship was an essential component in determining the relations of dominance and subordination. The consistent presentation of *peshkash* was the renewal of the relations established. The discontinuation of sending *peshkash* was seen as a grave offence. *Peshkash* also constituted an important source of revenue for the Mughal state. The anonymous author of the *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi* emphasizes that with the rise of the centrifugal tendency among the nobles, gradually *subas* and *parganas* were brought under the control of the prominent nobles which meant the loss of the revenue of the territories appropriated by the nobles. This affected the income of the imperial treasury and gradually it depleted; the imperial army diminished. On the other hand the nobles who had usurped the royal territories emerged as potent with their revenue generated from their acquired territories, enabling them to maintain an army. This made the Mughal Emperor 'more circumscribed than his nobles, upon whom he, in fact, became dependent, and was unable to depose or displace any one of them'.[1042]

Excessive generosity of the reigning Emperor also contributed to the exhausting imperial treasury. Generosity was considered to be one of the virtues of kingship. Persian accounts emphasize on the importance of being generous for the members of the court society. The writer of the *Akbari Darbar* says that one of the characteristics of elite was being magnanimous, that on feasts and festivities, he should entertain his guests sumptuously. 'यदि वह कंजूस होगा और अधिकार-संपन्न होने पर भी उसके द्वारा लोगों को कोई लाभ न

[1040] Ibid., pp. 38-39.
[1041] Ibid., p. 45.
[1042] Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi, p. 105.

पहुंचेगा, तो कोई उसे कुछ भी न समझेगा। सब लोग साफ़ कह देंगे कि यदि उसके पास धन है तो अपने घर में लिए बैठा रहे। हमें क्या है!'[1043] Therefore magnanimity was a virtue recommended not only for a ruler but also for the aristocrats. But it was to be shown on important occasions and as per the service provided by a person to the Emperor and his empire. The discourse of Machiavelli, Italian Renaissance philosopher and statesman, on generosity and parsimony for the sustenance of power argues, 'In the first case, this liberality is very necessary to a prince who marches with his armies, and lives by plunder, sacking and extorting, and is dealing with the wealth of others, for without it he would not be followed by his soldiers. And you may be very generous indeed with what is not the property of yourself or your subjects, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, for spending the wealth of others will not diminish your reputation, but increase it, only spending your own resources will injure you'. Machiavelli recommends generosity with moderation and in accordance with the availability of resources.[1044] The Mughals, through the custom of *peshkash* and *nazr* as one of the sources of income, had the constant flow of wealth to their imperial treasury. Through the generosity of their nobles which was encouraged through the means of court rituals and ceremonies and literature on *adab*, they demonstrated their own generosity.

The sanctity of the court was further destroyed by the recurrent assaults. The Emperor was compelled to appoint the Maratha *peshwa*, Balaji Baji Rao, as the governor of Malwa.[1045] The province of Katehar (Rohilkhand) was seized by an adventurer, 'Ali Muhammad Khan Ruhela. The loss of Kabul opened the empire to the threat of invasions from the northwest; a vital line of defense had disappeared. Punjab was again invaded, this time by Ahmad Shah Abdali,[1046] an Afghan lieutenant of Nadir Shah, who became

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[1043] *अकबरी दरबार*, भाग-३, पृ॰ २३६-२३७।

[1044] Niccolo Manucci, *The Prince*, Luigi Ricci, tr. Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, London, 1903, rep. 1921, pp. 63-4.

[1045] Baji Rao I invaded the capital city of the Mughals before Nadir Shah arrived in 1739. On 9 April, 1737 on the eve of a Hindu festival, D Naumi he reached Kalka Devi and looted the crowd assembled for the celebration of the festival. When the Mughal imperial army, hurriedly gathered and commanded by young nobles, came to rescue the city, they were overpowered by the Marathas. Percival Spear, Delhi, A Historical Sketch, *The Delhi Omnibus*, p. 38

[1046] He invaded Lahore, the province which he claimed to inherit from Nadir Shah who as per the treaty concluded between him and Muhammad Shah had received the right to possess the lands lying west of the

king of Kabul after Nadir's death (June 1747); Abdali sacked Lahore, and he was defeated by Mughal prince Ahmad Shah and Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu), who was the governor. But his repeated invasions eventually devastated the empire. Delhi in the eighteenth century saw the same story of anarchy, bloodshed, loot and ravage repeated over and over again. And the worst came in the year 1788 when Ghulam Qadir captured Delhi and in his quest for concealed imperial treasure blinded the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, starved the members of the imperial harem in consequence of which the children and old women died, filling the space with the stench of the dead bodies. The princes and Shah Alam's sister were beaten while the imperial princesses were molested. The royal treasury was fully destroyed and whatever valuables left in the *Diwan-i-Am* were looted.[1047] Thus, the sanctity of the court was obliterated.

Mirza Muhammad Rafi Sauda writing before 1760 in his work called *Shahrashob* shows how after the reign of Muhammad Shah the condition of nobility deteriorated:

"If a courtier of some mighty lord
You would go and be,
The torture of that status
Is a real calamity

"If you would take up commerce
Of these affections I must tell

What you have bought in Persia
In the Deccan you must sell.

"If you would take your merchandise
To some noble's house for sale
This is the pain you must endure:

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river Attoc and also to collect revenues of the provinces of Lahore, Gujarat, Multan and Kabul. William Francklin, *The History of the Reign of Shah-Aulum, the Present Emperor of Hindostaun: Containing the Transactions of the Court of Delhi and the Neighbouring States during a Period of Thirty-Six Years: Interspersed with Geographical and Topographical Observations on Several of the Principal Cities of Hindostaun*, Cooper and Graham, London, 1798, p.1.

[1047] Michael Edwardes, *King of the World, The Life and Times of Shah Alam, Emperor of Hindustan*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1970, pp. 202-205.

Just hear this curious tale.
"The noble seeks such bargains
That one's led to this belief,
That the noble thinks the seller
Is nothing but a thief.[1048]

During the much later phase when Shah Alam II was the Mughal Emperor (1772-1806), there was a severe political crisis for the Mughals. The Emperor was blinded and Prince Bidar Bakht was placed on the Mughal throne. Royal princes were whipped; ladies of the imperial harem were raped while the maidservants and eunuchs were beaten up to death to compel them to reveal the location where the royal treasuries were hidden.[1049] In spite of the fact that Ghulam Qadir who was full of hatred for Shah Alam[1050] and in full control of the imperial fort, himself did not attempt to proclaim himself as the Mughal sovereign. And even though the Mughal Emperor was powerless to stop or to avenge the grave insults inflicted upon his person as well as on the entire royal household, yet on threatening the Maratha Peshwa, Mahadji Sindhia in his letter to the latter, urging to blind Ghulam Qadir or else the Emperor would renounce the Mughal throne and retire to Mecca in a beggar's clothing, the Peshwa had captured and killed Qadir.[1051] His body parts (nose, ears, lips and eyes) were mutilated and each packed in a separate box was

[1048] Mark Pegors, A SHAHRASHOB OF SAUDA, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, Vol. XXV-No.1, Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1990, pp. 93-4.
[1049] Mehta, Jaswant Lal, *Advanced Study in the History of Modern India, 1707-1803*, p, 595.
[1050] The *Waqiat i Azfari* records that Ghulam Qadir had a medical condition called ubnah; in his youth he was one of the catamites of the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam. Alam, Muzaffar and Subrahmanyam Sanjay, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics*, Columbia University Press, p. 443.
Ubnah is a medieval Arabic medical term used for passive male homosexuality. Medieval physicians like Abu Bakr al-Razi wrote a monograph on ubnah and had described it a congenital disease. Male child afflicted by it has weak testicles and 'If it was intense and the person affected by it was not obviously effeminate and is not strongly inclined to pleasure but is repelled by it and would like to be free of it, it is possible for him to be treated.' A. Massad, Joseph, *Desiring Arabs*, University of Chicago Press, p. 251. Also see Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History and Literature*, New York University Press, New York, 1997, p. 29.
[1051] Satish Chandra Mittal, *Haryana, A Historical Perspective*, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1986, p. 13.

sent to the Emperor.[1052] For his service, the Emperor addressed Mahadji as his 'dear son' or *farzand*.[1053]

The local potentates continued to seek the imperial *farman* in order to validate their acquired power. Tipu Sultan (1782-99) in order to take the title of a sovereign ruler of Mysore and legitimize his authority tried to procure an investiture from the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II. However the Emperor declined his request because of the hostility of the Nizam of Hyderabad, Nizam Ali Khan towards Tipu Sultan and regarded him as a usurper. It was only after the rejection he received from the Mughal Emperor to give legitimacy and recognition to his power that he sent an embassy to a far-off land, Constantinople. The Ottoman Sultan accorded him the status of an independent ruler.[1054]

> …with the disposition and assassination of Alamgir II in 1758, it virtually ceased to exist. It is true the façade of imperial greatness remained till the end of the 18th c. and the Mughal Emperor continued to enjoy great prestige. He was still acknowledged as Emperor in many parts of India. Coins were struck and the *khutbah* was recited in his name. Indian princes and European trading companies eagerly sought to obtain titles and privileges from him; but he wielded no power or authority beyond a small area around Delhi.[1055]

By the time, the British became a paramount power in India and the Mughal Emperor politically had become a paper tiger, reduced to a mere pensioner of the East India Company, still the court continued to enjoy the status of a cultural center.[1056] 'Within the walls of the Red Fort the king retained his ruling powers… The etiquette of the court was maintained, the sonorous titles and the language of the great Mughals continued, and the Resident attended the durbar in the Diwan-i-khas regularly as a suitor. He dismounted

[1052] *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics*, Ibid., p. 444.
[1053] Mittal, p. 13.
[1054] *Waqia-i-Manazil-i-Rum* pp. 1, 62.
[1055] Khwaja Abdul Qadir, *Waqia-i-Manazil-i-Rum, Tipu Sultan's Mission to Constantinople*, ed. Mohibbul Hasan, Aakar Books, Delhi, 1968, p. 6.
[1056] Steven Kossak, *Indian Court Painting, 16th-19th Century*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Doris Duke Fund for Publications, New York, 1997, p. 20.

like any other courtier… and was conducted on foot… to the imperial presence where he stood respectfully like the rest.'[1057]

When Bishop Heber visited the court of Akbar Shah II and was given the audience by the Emperor, he observed all obligatory court protocols. He performed the salutation as per the Mughal custom, bowing 'three times very low'. He was allotted a position on the right hand side of the Emperor. Standing in a row, he was introduced to the Emperor. Heber offered his salutation for the second time and presented his *nazr* of '51 gold mohurs in an embroidered purse'. Returning to his assigned place in the *darbar* with five *mohurs* more in his hand, he offered those to the heir-apparent who was standing on the left hand side of the throne. His two companions too made their offerings; however the value of the gifts presented by them was less than the ones offered by Heber, indicating his status.[1058]

Permitting a courtier or a visitor to the court to speak was an imperial favour and if the Emperor spoke to him, it was indeed a grand favour shown by the august personage. Akbar Shah II enquired about Bishop Heber's health, his journeys, etc. whereas he spoke not a word to his companions. Thereafter he was granted a *khilat* which he was to wear in a separate private room and come in the presence of the Emperor. His companions too received the dress of honour but there was again a gradation seen. They were made to wear their respective *khilat* in the gateway of the *darbar*. Of the *khilat*, Heber noted it to be 'a handsome flowered caftan edged with fur'. When Bishop Heber was brought to the presence of the Emperor again after donning his *khilat*, he offered his presents for the third time and this time he presented a copy of the Bible written in Arabic and 'the Hindostani Common Prayer, handsomely bound in blue velvet laced with gold, and wrapped up in a piece of brocade'. The Emperor gave him a pearl necklace; in return Heber offered five *mohurs* for the honour he received. When he was permitted to leave the *darbar*, he, before taking his leave performed the salutation for the third time.

[1057] Percival Spear, Twilight of the Mughals, Studies in Late Mughul Delhi, *The Delhi Omnibus*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002*Twilight of the Mughals*, Cambridge, 1951, p. 38.
[1058] Bishop Heber, pp. 230-31.

The writing of Bishop Heber informs us that even in the much later phase of the empire, *durbar* protocols like salutations, award of *khilats* and other gifts, manner of speech, etc. continued but not without modifications as per the changing circumstances. The gifts offered by the Emperor were not as lavish and as magnificent as they used to be in former years. Heber complained that the ornaments he received from the Emperor were flamboyant but not precious. The *khilats* which were given to his companion were glitzy too and he assumed that those were made from 'the cast-off finery of the Begum'. The hall of audience (*diwan-i-khas*) though magnificently constructed yet its maintenance now was miserable. 'Half the flowers and leaves had been picked out or otherwise defaced, and the doors and windows were in a state of dilapidation, while a quantity of old furniture was piled in one corner, and a torn hanging of jaded tapestry hung over an archway which led to the interior apartments.'[1059] The *diwan-i-am*, Heber observed, 'was full of lumber of all descriptions, broken palanquins and empty boxes, and the throne so covered with pigeons' dung that its ornaments were hardly discernible'.[1060]

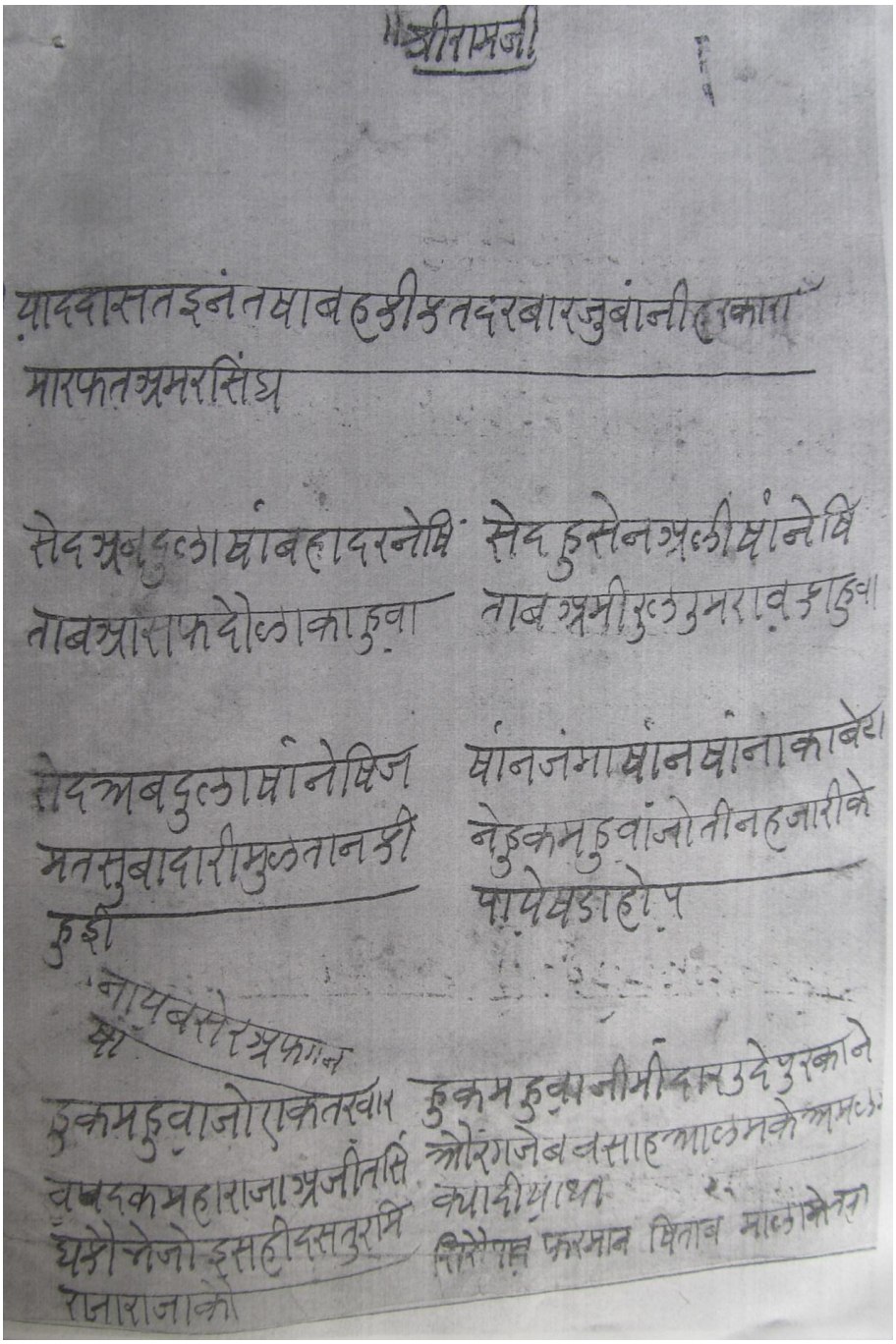
However another visitor to the imperial court, Lady Nugent in her journal had described the *diwan-i-am* in the following words, 'The hall of audience is beautifully gilt, and ornamented, and the musnud is very handsome; all the stones are mock, but the effect is good, and when the King holds his darbars, a string of real pearls is put into the mouths of each of the peacocks. All things about the palace seem to be restoring gradually, and the King has had the good taste, to order every thing to be restored, as nearly as possible, to its original appearance.'[1061] She also describes in her journal the royal procession.[1062]

[1059] Ibid., p. 232.
[1060] Ibid., p. 234.
[1061] *Lady Nugent's East India Journal*, ed. Ashley L. Cohen, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014, p. 192.
[1062] "The King was on an elephant, in a gold howdah; his dress was very showy, and, if all the jewels he wore were real, it was very magnificent—one large pearl, in the centre of his turban, was said to be worth a lac of rupees, or £12,500. All the royal family, and the principal people of his court, were dressed in cloth of gold and jewels. Most of them were on elephants, but some were on horses painted with showy colours, with fine trappings, and white chowries, hung round them. The green Mahometan colours were displayed, there was a band of music, also on camels, large kettle drums, at intervals, and small guns were fired, from the back of that animal."
'Each person presents the King with a nuzzar of rupees, according to his rank, and the King sits on his throne to receive these presents. All Europeans (military men excepted, as they wear boots), pull off their shoes when they enter the presence chamber…'Ibid., pp. 187-8.

Remarkably, one of the Mughal legacies which the British colonial power in India continued to carry on was the holding of *durbar* wherein it was imperative for all the local potentates to attend and it was equally vital for each one of them to offer *nazr* to the British King/Queen as an apparent mark of the acceptance of their subjugation and the overlordship of the British Crown. It was because of the meaning which the ceremony of offering *nazr* carried that it became a 'sore point' between the Mughal Emperor and the British power in India. Akbar II refused to give an audience to Governor-General Lord Hastings for the latter's reluctance to attend the imperial *darbar* and offer *nazr* to the Emperor, thus recognizing the sovereign status of the Mughal Emperor.[1063] Lord Curzon in a meeting of the Legislative Council at Shimla, 5 September 1902 gave a speech pertaining to the Coronation Durbar which was to be held on 1 January 1903 at Delhi. He, while talking about the need for holding the Coronation ceremony of the King England Edward VII at Delhi, speaks, "To the East, there is nothing strange, but something familiar and even sacred, in the practice that brings sovereigns into communion with their people in a ceremony of public solemnity and rejoicing, after they have succeeded to their high estate… and the installation durbar is an accepted and acceptable feature of ceremonial life from one end of the country to the other… But the community of interest between a sovereign and his people—to which such a function testifies, and which it served to keep alive—is most vital and most important'. Another important reason he cited was the idea that such kinds of festivities brought cohesion. 'In all our various divisions in this country—divisions of race and class and custom and creed—the one thing that holds us together, and subordinates the things that make for separation to the compelling force of union, is loyalty to a common head, membership of the same body politie, fellow-citizenship of the same Empire.'[1064] Therefore rituals of the Mughal kingship in the later Mughal period witnessed continuity and change, acquiring more ambiguity in their implications.

[1063] Mukhia, Harbans, *The Mughals of India*, Blackwell Publishing, Victoria, Australia, 2004, pp110-1.
[1064] Thomas Raleigh, *Lord Curzon in India; Being a Selection from his Speeches as Viceroy and Governor-General of India 1898-1905,* Macmillan and Co., London, New York, 1906, pp. 289-290.

The *Yaddasht* concerning the award of the titles to the Saiyyid brothers (the title of Asaf-ud-daulah to Abdullah Khan and the title of Amir-ul-umara to Saiyyid Husian Ali Khan) and the grant of a sword and *padak* to Maharaja Ajit Singh and Mirza Raja, Old Historical Records Office, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, Rajasthan



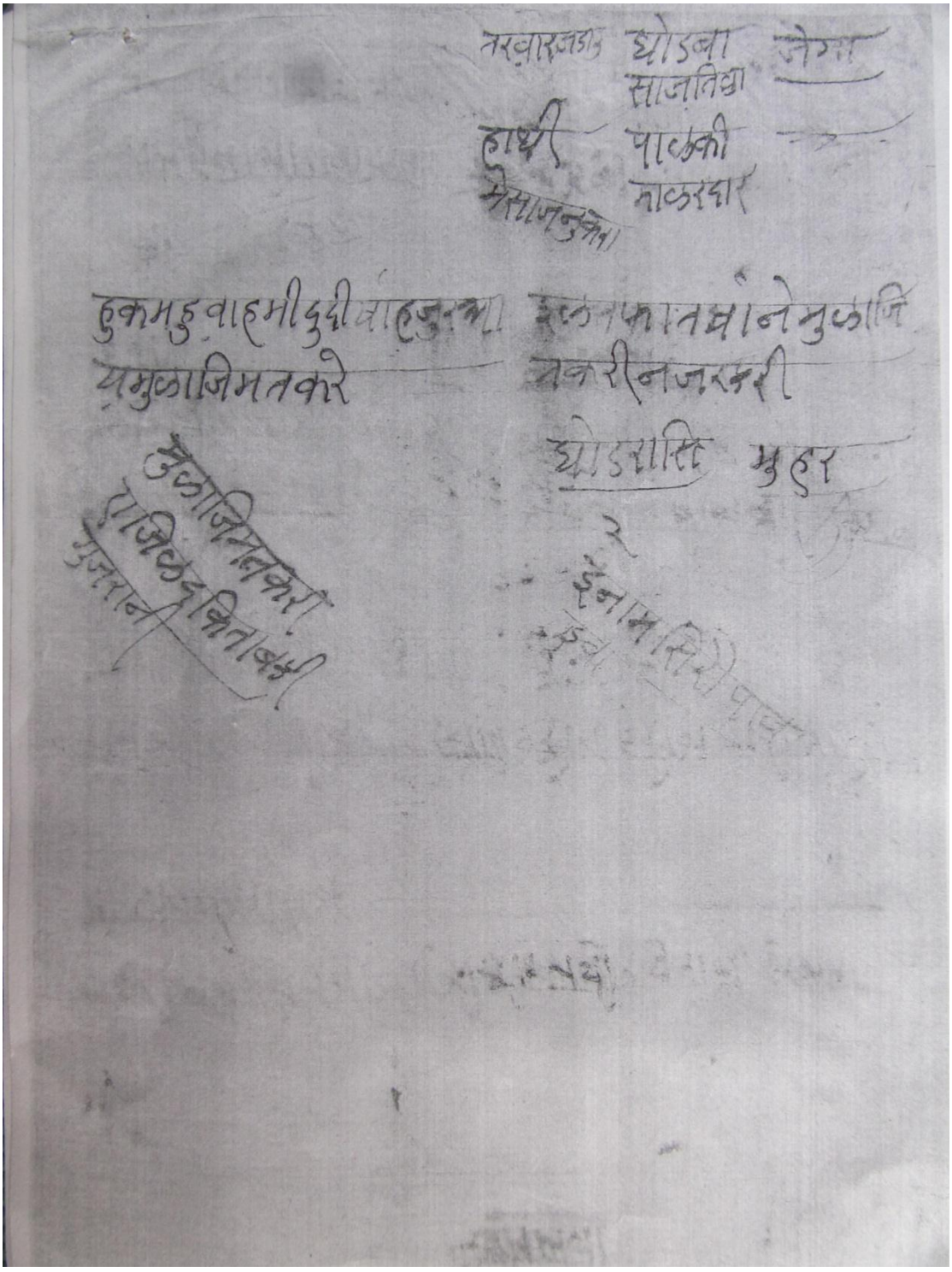

तरवारजडा घोडवा जेरा
साजतिशा
हाथी पालखी
मेसाजनुबा नाकरदार
हुकमहुवाहमीदुदी वाहुरुबा रुजनफातमाँनेमुळाजि
यमुळाजिमतकरे नकरीनजरनरी
घोडारासि मुहर
मुळाजिमतकरी
राजिदकिताबदी
गुजरान
इनामसिदी पत्र

Figure 6.1

Bhao Singh Receiving Sword of Honour from Prince Muazzam
Bundi, Rajasthan, 1690-1700 A.D.
National Museum, New Delhi

Figure 6.2

Maharaj Padam Singh avenging in the Imperial Durbar at Aurangabad the death of his brother, Maharaj Mohan Singh by killing the Emperor's brother-in-law

Ganga Government Museum, Bikaner, Rajasthan

The Museum placard reads:

"Padam Singh drew his sword, rushed upon his enemy" and "severed him in two with a blow which also left a mark upon the pillar", and also chipped the edge of the blade of his own sword.

"They", the Nobility and Officers of the Imperial Service, "all at once fled away from…and many of them jumped down from the top of", the 'katra' "to the ground below".

Figure 6.3

Farrukh Siyar Receiving Husain Ali Khan, 1713-19, Johnson Album 18, 5
Exhibition: 'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library', 22 November-31 December 2013
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi

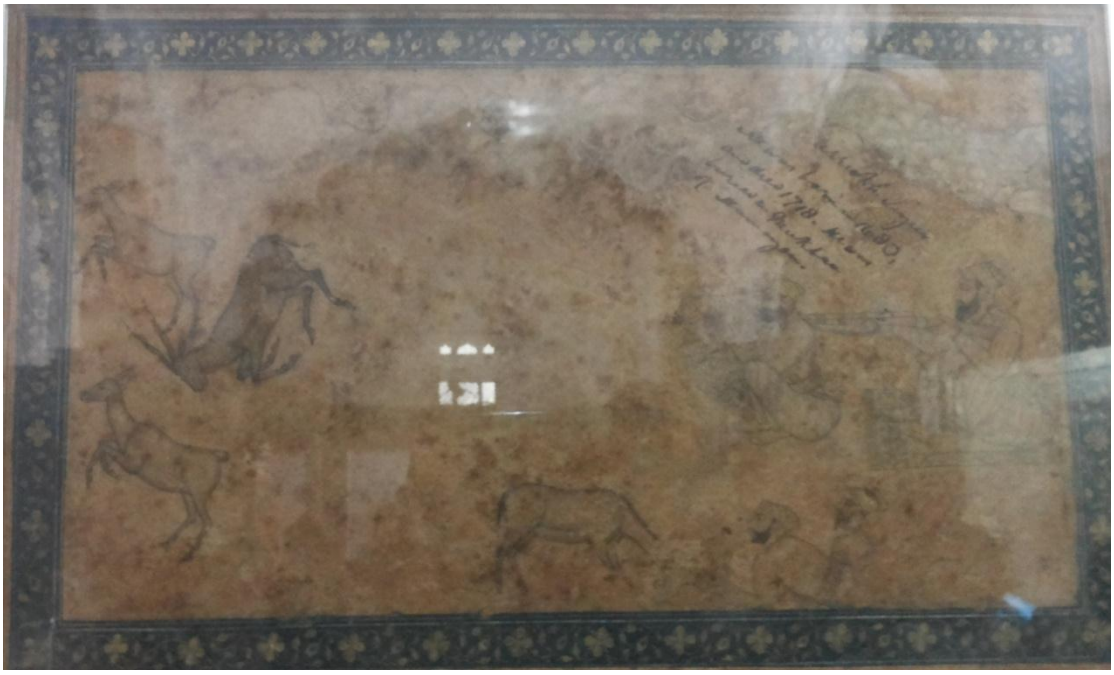


Figure 6.4

Farrukh Siyar Shooting Bucks, 18th Cent. A.D.
Mumtaz Mahal Museum, Red Fort, Delhi

Figure 6.5

Portrait of Nadir Shah
Mumtaz Mahal Museum, Red Fort, Delhi

Figure 6.6

Music, Dance and Acrobatics Scenes, Muhammad Shah period, 1730-40
National Museum, New Delhi

Figure 6.7

Muhammad Shah at the Viewing Window, 1735-40
Exhibition: 'The Mughals: Life, Art and Culture: Mughal Miniatures and Paintings in the British Library', IGNCA, New Delhi

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GLOSSARY

Amir: a high title of nobility or office, used throughout the Islamic world.

Amir-ul-umra: one of the highest titles granted by the Mughal Emperors. Literally, the term means the chief noble.

Arza-dasht: letter of petition.

Bakhshi: a military paymaster also in charge of military inspections and intelligence gathering.

Buraq: In Islamic tradition, Buraq is believed to be a heavenly steed that carried the prophets to heaven.

Crore: a unit in the Indian numbering system equal to ten million.

Chauth: traditional one-fourth portion of the land revenues collected by zamindars and later the Marathas in western India.

Dola: a Hindi term for the custom of giving a daughter to one's superior as tribute. The marriage is celebrated at the residence of the bridegroom.

Jagir: temporary fiscal right conferred by the Mughal Emperor to collect the land tax from a specified village, *pargana*, or large area.

Jagirdar: holder of a *jagir* (revenue-producing lands granted in lieu of salary).

Jizya: an annual tax imposed on *dhimmis* (non-Muslim subjects) by Muslim rulers.

Khalifa: the *Caliph* or the secular successor to the Prophet Muhammad who assumes leadership of the entire Islamic world.

Lakh: a unit equal to one hundred thousand.

Mansab: rank, status and position denoted by numerical rank and title.

Nasaqchis: military police of Persia.

Nazr: an offering of gold coins.

Pargana: an administrative unit.

Peshkash: not essentially a cash gift, sent to the imperial court by princes and nobles (appointed as provincial governors), local potentates, etc. who could not attend the imperial *durbar* daily.

Peshwa: a modern Prime Minister to the Maratha *Chattrapatis* or rulers.

Qazi: Muslim judge who renders decisions according to the *Shariah*, the canon law of Islam.

Qazi-ul-Quzut: Chief *Qazi.*

Raja: literally King; mostly an important chieftain who had accepted the Emperor's sovereignty; sometimes title given by the Emperor to individuals.

Rizwan: an archangel in Islam who is in charge of maintaining Jannah (Paradise).

Sawar: numerical ranking denoting the number of armed heavy cavalrymen each Mughal officer was required to bring to the muster.

Shariah: Islamic cannon law derived from three sources: the *Quran*; the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* (practice and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad).

Tika: the vermilion mark placed on the forehead of a Rajput.

Umara: plural of *amir*.

Ulema: men learned in the *Shariah*.

Watan: literally homeland.

Watan jagir: ancestral lands allotted in jagir to Rajpur Mughal officers.

Wazir: chief fiscal minister for the Mughal Emperor.

Zamindar: holder of hereditary superior right in land.

Zat: personal numerical rank held by a Mughal officer.